An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 11

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Al-Islam.org

Sub Title:

From Surah al-Mu'minun (23) to Surah al-Furqan (25) verse 20

Publisher(s):

Imam Ali Foundation [1]

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From Surah al-Mu'minun (23) to Surah al-Furqan (25) verse 20

The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, "An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an" compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

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Topic Tags:

Qur'anic Exegesis (Tafsir) [6]

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward"1.

“We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims" [2].

“When those come to thee who believe **in** ***Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself*** **(*****the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended*** **(*****his conduct*****),** ***Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful”*** [3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (*of people*) *which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself* (*follows it*)*; and he who puts it behind himself* (*neglects it*) *will be driven to Hell.*

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in *which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining* (*of goals*)*. It is the Separator* (*of right and wrong*). [4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir’.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the

command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of *Allah,* the preservation of which has been guaranteed by *Allah,* Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)" [6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of **'References'**) which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.." [7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as *Allah* says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified" [8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself,

viz, Ahlul-Bait, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth- Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul-Bait, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul-Bait's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (a) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled **'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an',** begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation from a lowly life–germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10].

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that *Allah* accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and phililogists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul-Bait (a) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (***created***) ***thing its form and nature and further gave*** (***it***) ***guidance"***[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of **'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran'** has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native

language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought ***A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an,*** basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor... [14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found –no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible –nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..." [15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'" [16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..." [17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will " [18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..." [19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"***And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from*** (***sources***) ***he never could imagine...***"[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21].

Wa Salam.

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah il-Ozma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj-ul-Islam:

1. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Rida Ashtiyani
2. Hajjatul-Islam Muhammad Jafar Emami
3. Hajjatul-Islam Abdur-Rassul Hassani
4. Hujjatul-Islam Sayyed Hassan Shujaiee
5. Hujjatul-Islam Mahmud Abdellahi
6. Hujjatul-Islam Muhsen Ghara'ati
7. Hujjatul-Islam Muhammad Muhammadi

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيهَا النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (*the Messenger and the Qur'an*) ***from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light*** (*that is*) ***manifest."***[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَفِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (*from* ***corruption***)*."*[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (*the Qur'an*)***, verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".***[3]

وَ نُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down** (**stage by stage**) **of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe … "4

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

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A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you". 1

(***'Those charged with authority'***

are only the twelve sinless Imams (a) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

*He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'*2

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".3

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul-Bait; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

*"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".*4

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (a) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (a) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (a) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." 5

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah al-Mu'minun, Chapter 23

Surah al-Mu'minun (The Believers) (23)

(Revealed in Mecca)

118 verses in 6 sections

The Virtues of the Recitation of Sura Al-Mu'minun

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

There are many virtues have been stated about this Sura in the recorded narrations quoted from the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as).

On the virtue of reciting this Sura, for example, Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Frequent recitation of this Sura, especially on Fridays, brings bliss in this world and the Hereafter, and it also leads to the enjoyment of the company of the Divine prophets in the lofty Paradise." 1

In a tradition by the Prophet (S), we read:

"On the Day of Hereafter, the angels will give whoever recites Sura al-Mu'minun good tidings about the breath of life and a Garden of delight, and when the Angel of Death comes to take his soul, he will give him such good tidings that he will be delighted." 2

Imam Sadiq also said:

“Whoever reads Sura al-Mu’minun and continues reading it every Friday, Allah will render the end of his life blissful and his place will be raised high in Paradise alongside the prophets and the messengers.”[3]

It is necessary to reiterate this point that mentioning the virtues of reciting the Suras of the Qur’an never means reading them without pondering upon them and practicing them, for this heavenly Book is a book with a practical program for the training and education of man.

If someone really harmonizes his practical and doctrinal programs with the content of this Sura, or even with a few of the verses which are found at the beginning of it that refer to the attributes of the believers, on the Day of Judgment, all these glories will certainly be granted to him.

Thus, in some Islamic narrations we read that when the first verses of this Sura were revealed, the Prophet (S) said:

“Ten verses have been revealed to me (that) whoever puts them into practice will enter Paradise.”[4]

Using the Arabic word /’aqama/ (put into practice) instead of the word /qara’a/ (recite) refers to the same fact mentioned above, that the main aim is not only bare reading them but applying the meaning of these verses to everyday life.

The Content of the Sura

As the name of this Sura suggests, its content is mostly about the special attributes of the believers, and, at the end, it mentions some statements upon the beliefs and practice that complete these attributes.

The contents of this Sura can be divided into seven parts:

The First Part

Beginning with the noble verse:

“Successful indeed are the believers”

and continuing for several verses afterwards, this Sura mentions some of the attributes that lead to the salvation and deliverance of the believers. These practical attributes are so comprehensive and accurate that they also cover various aspects of social and personal life.

The Second Part

Since their essence is totally belief and monotheism, these verses proceed to mention the different signs of knowing Allah and His signs in the macrocosm and microcosm of the world of existence. It recounts some examples of the wonderful system of the world of creation, such as the sky, the earth, and the creation of man, plants and animals.

The Third Part

To complete the practical dimensions of the noble Sura, the verses here cite the instructive biography of some of the great prophets such as Noah, Hud, Moses, and Jesus (peace be on them) as a few examples by mentioning certain aspects of their lives.

The Fourth Part

This part addresses the arrogant, sometimes by appealing to their logical reason and sometimes by warning them in harsh tones in order to arouse the consciences of the receptive ones and find their way back to Allah.

The Fifth Part

This part contains some concise discussions on the subject of Resurrection.

The Sixth Part

It speaks about both Allah's Sovereignty over the world of existence and irresistibility of His command over the entire universe.

The Seventh Part

The Resurrection, the weighing of deeds, the reward for those who do right and the punishment for those who do wrong are again mentioned here, and the noble Sura ends by mentioning the aim of the creation of man.

Thus, the content of this holy Sura is a collection of some cognitive issues that encourages us to reflect, and the doctrinal and practical lessons, and from the beginning of the Sura to the end talk about the entire path the believers must pave.

As was mentioned before, this holy Sura was revealed in Mecca, yet some commentators of the holy Qur'an have said that some of its verses had been revealed in Medina. This is because it contains a verse that refers to the alms-tax (zakat).

Since the alms-tax was legislated for the first time in Medina, this fact has led them to think that the complete Sura could not have been revealed in Mecca, because it is known that alms-tax was at first legislated in Medina and after the revelation of the verse:

"…Take alms out of their possessions…"[5],

the Prophet (S) ordered alms-tax collectors to go around and collect this tax from the people.

With respect to this issue we must be aware, however, that the alms-tax also has a general meaning that includes both obligatory and recommended alms-taxes. Its meaning is not limited to the obligatory alms-tax alone, for we see in the Islamic narrations that the ritual prayer and the payment of this tax have often been mentioned together.

A narration by Imam Sadiq and Imam Baqir (as) says:

"Allah has made the alms-tax along with the ritual prayer obligatory."[6]

Moreover, some Islamic scholars believe that the alms-tax had, also been obligatory in Mecca, but it was general and undefined, meaning that every one was obliged to give some part of his possessions to the needy.

When the Islamic government was established in Medina, a precise system was devised for regulating, collecting and distributing the alms-tax along with specifying the minimum value of property upon which it should be levied and collected by the Prophet's agents.

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan
2. Majma' ul-Bayan, The Commentary, Vol. 7, p. 98
3. Majma' ul-Bayan, Vol. 7, p.98
4. Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, Vol. 18, p.2
5. Sura At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 103
6. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol.93, p. 14; and Fru'-i-Kafi, Vol. 3, p. 496

Section 1: The Faithful

Surah al-Mu'minun , Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

1. "Successful indeed are the believers, "

2. “Who are humble in their prayers, ”

In The Holy Qur’an, there are eleven cases in which the Arabic word /falah/ (salvation) is used along with the word /la‘ alla/, (perhaps), and in only three cases the word /falah/ is mentioned without /la‘alla/ in a sense implying certainty.

One of them is in this Sura, the other is in Sura Ash-Shams, No, 91, verse 9,

“He is indeed successful who purifies it”

and the third case is found in Sura Al-’A‘la’, No. 87, verse 14, where it says:

“Indeed, he will prosper who purifies himself.”

By comparing these three cases, it becomes clear that faith and purification are one in essence.

The ultimate and supreme aim of every program in Islam is success and salvation. Many verses of the holy Qur’an that mention piety and religious decrees also aim to achieve piety:

“...so that you may guard yourselves (against evil).”[1]

whereas the categorical aim of piety is:

“...and be in awe of Allah; that you may be prosperous.”

It is interesting that the most important and the ultimate definitive objective of the religion of Islam has manifestly been mentioned in its first testimony:

“Say there is no god but Allah, (so that) you will be successful.”

As we said earlier, the choice of the title, “Al-Mu’minun” for this Sura is because of the beginning verses of the Sura that enumerate the attributes of the believers in some short, lively, significant and comprehensive phrases.

In addition, it is interesting that this Sura first mentions the delightful and glorious destiny of the believers before talking about their attributes in order to kindle the flames of love and enthusiasm in them for reaching this goal and great honour in their souls.

The Qur’an implies, having gained their final goal in all dimensions, the believers are prosperous.

It says:

“Successful indeed are the believers”

The Arabic term /aflaha/ is derived from the word /falaha/ and /falah/. It originally means ‘cutting and

splitting' and is then applied to every kind of victory and achievement that results in man's happiness and success.

In fact, the successful, prosperous and triumphant persons manage to overcome obstacles that lie in their way to reach the goal.

Of course, true success and salvation have such extended meanings that include both material and spiritual victories and both of them have also been considered with respect to the qualified believers.

Victory and success in the present world mean that man would live freely, independently, prosperously, and honorably and these good conditions are only achieved under the shadow of faith. Success in the Hereafter means to abide respectfully and prosperously under the mercy of Allah, showered by eternal blessings and having the company of purified and amenable friends.

Twenty times every day and night we say /hayya 'alal-falah/ (Come to success!) in the call to prayer and in the prologue to the daily ritual prayers, clearly declaring this final aim so that we do not lose our path.

Islam says:

"Those who have faith and purify their souls are indeed successful".

But Pharaoh uttered the blasphemy:

"...whoever is uppermost this day will be indeed successful".[2]

The Arabic word /falah/ means to prosper. Maybe the reason that the farmer in Arabic is called a /fallah/ is because he makes the conditions ready for plants to grow and prosper. When a seed is placed in the soil, it rescues itself by 3 actions and reaches open space:

1) It plants its roots in the depths of the ground.

2) It absorbs the nutrients of the soil.

3) It moves the soil away from its path in its growth upward.

Like a seed, the human being must accomplish these three actions in order to free himself and reach the open space of monotheism delivering himself from false gods and the dark world of materialism:

1) He must fortify the roots of his beliefs through reasoning.

2) He must gain Allah-given potentialities as much as possible for spiritual development and perfection.

3) He ought to discard enemies and obstacles and pushes aside any deity other than Allah with the phrase *'La 'ilaha 'ilia Llah'* (*"There is no god save Allah"*) in order to reach the open space of monotheism.

Who Are the Successful?

1- Worshippers:

"...and worship your Lord, and do good, that haply you may prosper."[3]

2- Those whose deeds are valuable and heavy:

"...Then whoever's scales be heavy, those are they who shall be prosperous."[4]

3- Those who avoid jealousy:

"...And whoso is saved from his own avarice such are who are successful."[5]

4- Allah's party:

"...Beware! Verily the party of Allah are the successful ones."[6]

5- Those who remember Allah much:

"...and remember Allah much, that you may be prosperous."[7]

6- The God-fearing:

"...So be in awe of Allah, O' possessors of intellects, that you may be prosperous."[8]

7- Warriors for faith:

"...and strive hard in His way, that you may be prosperous."[9]

8- Penitents:

"...And turn unto Allah all together, O believers, in order that you may succeed."[10]

Some Traditions On Success and Salvation

1) Imam Ali (as) said:

"Anyone whose passions are overcome by (his reason and) his wisdom would be successful."[11]

2) He also said:

"Follow knowledge and disobey ignorance so that you may prosper."[12]

3) The Prophet (S) said:

"Successful is he who renders his soul sincere for faith, makes his heart clean and sound, makes his

*tongue veracious, makes his psyche calm, makes his morals fair, makes his ears heedful and makes his eyes watchful"*13.

4) Imam Ali (as) said:

*"O' People! Steer clear through the waves of mischief by boats of deliverance, turn away from the path of dissention and put off the crowns of pride. Prosperous is he who rises with wings, or he surrenders and finds peace."*14

5) Qummi narrates a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

"When Allah, the Mighty, created Paradise, He told it to speak. It said:

"Successful indeed are the believers."15

The next verse looks at the attributes of the believers, and in this context, at first and foremost, singles out the importance of the ritual prayer. It says:

"Who are humble in their prayers".

The Qur'anic term /xaši'un/ (who are humble) is from the word /xušu'/, meaning the state of spiritual and physical modesty, which is adopted outwardly by the body in man when in the presence of a great person or an important truth.

Here, the Holy Qur'an does not count merely performing the ritual prayer itself as a sign of the believers, but it considers 'humility' in the ritual prayer as one of their attributes. This refers to the fact that their prayers are not meaningless and some soulless words and movements.

When they perform the ritual prayer, they give their complete attention to Allah, detaching themselves from all other than Allah and thus achieving a meeting with Him.

They are so absorbed in contemplating and supplicating to the Divine presence that every particle of their beings is influenced by it. They see themselves as a mere atom in the presence of an Unlimited Being and as a drop in a Vast Ocean.

For the believer, every moment of this prayer is a lesson of self-development and training in being truly human and a means for refining the heart and soul.

An Islamic tradition indicates that the Prophet (S) once saw a man playing with his beard while praying. The Prophet (S) said:

*"If he was humble in his heart, limbs of his body would also be humble."*16

This statement refers to the fact that humility is an inward state that affects one's exterior. The great

spiritual leaders of Islam were so humble in their prayers that when they were in a state of prayer they became estranged from all other than Allah.

There is a tradition that says when the Prophet (S) was standing to perform the prayers, he would occasionally look up to the heavens, but when this verse was revealed, he began looking downwards from that time onwards and never raised his head while at prayer.

Some Points

1- The Prophet (S) said:

"One who is not humble in his ritual prayer, never receives its virtue."[17]

2- Allah, The Almighty, said to Christ:

"Shed tears for Me from your eyes and be humble (and modest) in your heart."[18]

3- Imam Ali (as) said:

"There is no goodness in a heart that is not humble, and in an eye that does not shed tears (out of fear of Allah) and in a deed that has no benefit."[19]

4- Amir ul Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Whoever is humble (and modest) before the grandeur of Allah (Glory be to Him), the disobedient will bow down before him and whoever takes Allah as a supporter his difficulties will be solved."[20]

5- The Prophet (S) was asked about humility. He said:

"It is humbleness (and modesty) at the time of the ritual prayer and that the servant (of Allah) focuses his whole heart upon Allah, the Almighty and Glorious."[21]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 3-4

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ

3. "And those who keep aloof from (what is) vain, "
4. "And those who are active in giving the poor due (zakat), "

Vanity in Deed and Speech

'Al Laghw' is an action or a speech that is vain.

Avoiding vanity and frivolousness is not only limited to Muslims, for, concerning the good people among the People of the Book, the holy Qur'an also says:

"And when they hear vanity they withdraw from it..."[22]

In the abovementioned noble verse, this second attribute of the believers is mentioned after the attribute of humility.

It says:

"And those who keep aloof from (what is) vain, "

In fact, all of their movements and policies of life have a useful and constructive purpose, because uselessness means futility and ineffectiveness in action.

As a matter of fact, as great interpreters of the Qur'an have said, every action and speech that does not carry a significant benefit, is vain. Some of other interpreters have rendered vanity as nullity, and others have interpreted it as sins on the whole.

Some have interpreted it as cursing or using bad language, others as profane singing, frivolity and play, while yet others have interpreted it as polytheism. All of these mentioned interpretations are extensions of this general and comprehensive concept.

Of course, vanity does not only mean idle talk and deeds, but it also means idle, futile and baseless thoughts that result in neglecting Allah (s.w.t). It also prevents us from pondering upon good and constructive things. All of these characteristics mentioned above are summed up in the concept of one word, /laqw/ (vanity).

In actual fact, the believers are so trained that not only do they not get involved in frivolous and baseless thoughts and actions but, as the Holy Qur'an says, they also avoid them. In other words, a vain action is a deed that has no benefit. Vain actions, however, can be relative, for sometimes an action would be vain concerning one situation while worthwhile and useful in another.

However Allah, Glory be to Him, does not characterize the believers as those who abandon vain deeds absolutely, for man is a being that is on the verge of committing sins and making mistakes, He rather describes them as those who abstain from them, not its absolute abandonment.

Abstinence necessitates the existence of something that invites man to occupy himself with an action but heedlessly and not giving any value to it, he turns his back upon it and busies himself with something

else. Someone who abstains from an action sees involving himself with that action as below his dignity and would rather pursue higher aims and more noble tasks.

Real faith calls on all of mankind to cultivate this attitude, too, for faith belongs to the realm of greatness and majesty, and is the source of glory, nobility and splendor. One who is faithful endeavors only to live for final prosperity and eternalsuccess.

He pursues activities that are considered great by Allah and he does not value the actions and conduct of the ignorant and ignoble. If the ignorant address the believers, they (the believers) answer them with kindness and when the believers see vain activity they deal with it with nobility and magnanimity.

This state of the believers makes it clear that, describing them with the quality of avoiding from 'what is vain', is a metaphorical meaning pointing to the high determination, dignity and nobility of their personality.

Some Tradition On Vanity

1) The Prophet (S) said:

"The most honorable of people are those who abandon what is useless."[23]

2) The Prophet (S) also said:

"Peace of self is achieved by abandoning vain affairs."[24]

3) Imam Baqir (as) said:

"You should act with justice and do not heel with the difficulties you face with (in this way), and abstain from what is vain."[25]

4) Imam Sadiq (as) said;

"Do refrain from doing what is vain, for you will become abject and despised."[26]

5) Imam Sadiq (as) said in a prayer:

"Oh Allah! Have mercy on me (to be able) to abandon sins totally while I am alive, and be merciful to me, so that I do not get into troubles because of what is vain."[27]

6) Imam Ali (as) in a latter wrote to Abdullah ibn Abbas:

"Then, follow what is beneficent and leave what is vain, for abandoning vain affairs causes you to gain useful actions."[28]

7) The Prophet (S) said:

“Do not bring the flames of the fire upon your faces by involving yourselves in vain activities.”[29]

8) Imam Ali (as) said:

“Many a vain word speech and conduct that bring an evil.”[30]

9) Imam Ali (as) said:

“Every speech in which there is no remembrance of Allah is vain.”[31]

10) The Prophet (S) said:

“A good sign of a person’s Islam, is the abandoning of what is vain.”[32]

The Alms-Tax (Zakat)

The Arabic word /zakat/ in philology means purification, cleanliness, growth and development. In Islamic law and for the Muslims, it means a specific part of one’s possessions that must be deducted, with particular conditions, and then spent upon the poor, the indigent, and for other good activities.

In other words, /zakat/ is subtracting a part of property from one’s possessions and giving it to the needy so that those possessions which remain with the owner would grow by Divine grace and increase the owner’s spiritual rank.

In addition, alms-tax (zakat) wipes away that which is unlawful from one’s possessions and takes blameworthiness and bad attributes away from its owner. So we can say that since paying the alms-tax wipes away the qualities of mammonism, selfishness, stinginess, meanness, hardheartedness, and avarice from the human soul, it is called ‘zakat’.

The alms-tax (zakat) is a very important religious duty and service. It is an Islamic obligation which is the third item of the fundamental principles of the religion, and, in other words, it has been counted as the second pillar of the religion.

In The Holy Qur’an and in the narrations attributed to the Infallible Imams, the alms-tax has a very high and important status. By carefully studying the verses of the Holy Qur’an, we find that the alms-tax and its importance are mentioned right after many verses concerning ritual prayers.

In a narration by the Prophet (S) and Imam Sadiq (as) we read that one who does not pay the smallest amount of alms-tax on his possessions, is counted not a believer or a Muslim.

In another tradition by the Prophet (S), we read that one day he (S) evicted five persons who did not pay their alms-tax and said to them:

“You who do not pay the alms-tax get out of our mosque and do not perform the ritual prayer in our

mosque."

It has been mentioned in another narration that we should pay our alms-tax, so that our ritual prayers would be accepted.

Other narrations warn people that if they do not pay the alms-tax on their wealth, the ground would take away their blessings by Divine Commandment and they will be in the grip of destitution and famine.

We will read about more interesting explanations on this subject stated by the Infallible Imams in the following pages.

However, this verse refers to the third attribute of the true believers, which has a social and economic aspect.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"And those who are active in giving the poor due (zakat), "

This Sura was revealed in Mecca, and at that time the law requiring the payment of the ordinary alms-tax had not been revealed. Thus, there are different interpretations stated upon this verse by commentators.

What seems more correct is that 'zakat' does not exclusively mean 'the obligatory legal alms-tax', because Islam has quite a number of 'recommended alms donations'. The alms tax, as an obligatory act, was revealed in Medina, but the payment of alms as a recommended good deed had also been achieved before that.

Some interpreters comment that 'zakat' in Mecca had probably been in the form of a religious obligation but without any limits and exact prescription, which means that Muslims had been under an obligation to give some amount of their wealth to the needy.

It was only after the establishment of the Islamic state and a public treasury that a well defined system of zakat payments was organized fixing the minimum value of property upon which the alms-tax was payable and dispatching zakat collectors were sent around the community on the command of the Prophet (S).

Some interpreters of the Holy Qur'an, such as Fakhr-i-Razi, Alusi in Ruh-ul-Ma'ani and, Raqib in Mufradat, have said, however, that 'zakat' here means any kind of good act or purification of the soul and heart.

This is very improbable, for wherever the Glorious Qur'an mentions the ritual prayer along with the alms-tax, the alms-tax means to combat financial prodigality, and inferring other meanings would need a supporting context that does not exist here.

In the end, it is necessary to study some of the narrations and one verse on the alms-tax.

Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 12 says:

"...and Allah said: 'Verily! I am with you. If you keep up prayer and pay the poor due, and believe in My messengers and support them, and lend unto Allah a kindly loan, I shall certainly remit your sins, and I shall certainly cause you to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow..."

Some Narrations Upon Alms-Tax (Zakat)

1) Amir ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"I recommend you to pay the alms-tax, for I heard your Prophet, (Peace be on him and his household) saying: 'The alms-tax is the bridge of Islam; then he who pays it will pass over the bridge and he who does not will fall off, and the payment of the alms-tax soothes Allah's wrath'."[33]

2) One narrator says that he heard Imam Ali (as) saying:

"The pillars of Islam are three that none of them is useful without accompanying the other two; they are the ritual prayer, the alms-tax, and guardianship (wilayat)."[34]

3) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"If people pay the alms-tax out of their possessions, there will be no poor and needy Muslim left."[35]

4) The Prophet (S) said,

"No people had prevented the payment of the alms-tax without Allah taking away His rain (of mercy) from them."[36]

5) Rufatah says that he heard Imam Sadiq (as) saying:

"Allah enjoins this people nothing more difficult than paying the alms-tax and when they refrain from paying it, many of them will perish."[37]

6) The Prophet (S) said:

"I am ordered to struggle with the people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am Allah's Messenger, and (that) they perform the ritual prayer and pay the alms-tax."[38]

7) The Prophet (S) said:

"Treat your sick ones by paying alms, and protect your possessions by paying the alms-tax."[39]

8) Imam Musa-ibn-Ja'far (as) said:

“The alms-tax has been established to be the food of the poor and the cause of the increase of their wealth.”[40]

9) Hadrat Fatimat-uz-Zahra (as) in her sermon said:

“Allah established the Faith (’Iman) as the means to purify you from polytheism, the ritual prayer as the means for you to be distant from pride, and made the alms-tax obligatory for purifying the soul and heart and increasing provisions.”[41]

10) The Prophet (S) said:

“One who pays the alms-tax, for every dirham would be given him blessings in Paradise as great as the weight of Mount ’Uhud.”[42]

11) At the time of his departure from this world, Amir ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“My son! I bequeath that you perform the ritual prayer at its very time, and give the alms-tax to those who are entitled to have it and where it is entitled to be spent.”[43]

12) Narrating from his dignified ancestors, Imam Sadiq (as) said that the Prophet (S) had said:

“The most generous one of the people is he who pays the alms-tax out of his possessions, and the most stingy one of the people is he who is tight fisted with what Allah has enjoined upon him.”[44]

13) Amir ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“Save your faith by giving alms, insure your possessions by paying the alms-tax and ward off the waves of misfortune and troubles by supplication.”[45]

14) Imam Baqir (as) said:

“The alms-tax increases provisions.”[46]

15) Imam Ali (as) said:

“The meaning of/ma‘un/ (in the Holy Qur’an) is the obligatory alms-tax. He who abstains from paying it is like a usurer, and he who does not pay the alms-tax out of his possessions is not a Muslim.”[47]

16) The Prophet (S) said:

“When the payment of alms-tax is prevented, the earth restrains its blessings.”[48]

17) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Thieves are of three kinds: Those who do not pay the alms-tax, those who count the dower (of the

wives) as lawful and do not pay it, and one who borrows but does not intend to pay it back."[49]

18) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The Prophet (S) levied the alms-tax upon nine objects: wheat, barley, date, raisins, gold, silver, camels, cattle and sheep. And he excused everything else from it save for these (mentioned objects)."[50]

19) Suma'ah said that he asked Imam Sadiq (as) who was entitled to receive the alms. He said:

"I swear by Allah that the alms belongs to those who are mentioned in His Book (the Holy Qur'an): the poor, the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled (toward Islam by receiving it), and to free the captives, and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer. (This is) a duty (ordained) by Allah."[51]

20) The Prophet (S) said:

"The alms-tax is not lawful to be given to the rich, nor to the one who is wise and healthy, nor to the one who has a job." I asked: "What does this mean?" He said: "It is not lawful for one to receive the alms-tax when he is able not to use it."[52]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 5-7

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ

إِلاَّ عَلَي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ

فَمَنِ ابْتَغَي وَرَآءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ

5. "And those who guard their private parts, "
6. "Save from their wives or the (slaves) that their right hands possess, for then verily they are not blameworthy, "
7. "But whoso craves beyond that, such are transgressors, "

Since the sexual instinct can be the one most likely to be misused, self-preservation against this needs piety, austerity and strong faith. In this verse emphasis is put on this subject.

The verse says:

"And those who guard their private parts, "

The verse implies that the fourth attribute of the believers is chastity, which is self-control and abstinence from every kind of sexual impropriety. It means that they guard themselves from lewdness and only have intercourse with their wives and slave women, in which there is no blame.

It says:

"Save from their wives of the** (**slaves**) **that their right hands possess, for then verily they are not blameworthy, "

In the seventh verse The Holy Qur'an continues saying:

"But whoso craves beyond that, such are transgressors."

Using the phrase, 'guarding private parts' in this verse refers to the fact that if there is no constant and unflinching control over the tendencies towards sexual misconduct, there will be the danger that its deviations and excesses can overwhelm the individual and even the society.

The word 'wives' in the verse includes both permanent and temporary wives, although some Sunni interpreters have made a mistake here, while the concerning jurisprudents and the interpreters of the Qur'an have identified this mistake in their books of commentary and in the book on the legal issues of An-Nikah.

Using the Qur'anic phrase /qayra malumin/ (they are not blameworthy), most likely, refers to the wrong idea among the deviated Christians that consider every kind of sexual intercourse against human dignity and that its absolute abundance is a virtue.

They see any form of marriage to be inimical to reaching full spiritual realization to the extent that Catholic priests, monks and nuns remain celibate all their lives. They think marriage is something against this spiritual rank. (Though it is mostly in apparent and secret a group of them behave differently.)

At any rate, it is impossible to accept that Allah would create such a powerful instinct in man as part of the wisdom of creation and men prohibit it totally or count it as against the dignity of man. Indeed, the unnaturalness of this attitude has resulted in many members of these very Christian orders resorting to multifarious surreptitious ways to satisfy their sexual instincts.[53]

One does not need to be reminded that the legality of having sexual relations with a wife is circumscribed under some certain conditions such as menstruation and the like.

Furthermore, the legality of such relationships with slave-girls has numerous conditions that are mentioned in the books of jurisprudence. It is not the case that every slave-girl is lawful for her owner and the same conditions that apply to wives can also apply to them in some cases.

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to some narrations regarding this issue:

1) Abdullah Sinan has narrated that Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Indeed woman is a collar you put around your neck and bind yourself by it. Thus, you should look at her closely and think carefully about who is going to take control of you and finally where she is going to lead you. Be aware that a bad woman cannot be compared with a good one for a good woman is more priceless than gold, silver or any precious gem, and a bad woman has no value at all, she is not even equal to the soil, for the soil is indeed better than her."[54]

2) Ibrahim Karkhy said,

"I told Imam Sadiq (as) that my wife, who was in agreement with me about the affairs of life, had died and that now I want to marry another woman. The Imam told me: 'Think well and see where you put your heart and soul and who will be your partner in your possessions and will be aware of your beliefs and secrets. If you intend to get married, select a maiden who is characterized by honour and good morals and who is from a family that you know is good, chaste, and honest."

3) Ali-ibn-Salim narrated that Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Certainly one whose punishment on the Day of Resurrection is more severe than others is a man who puts his seed in the womb of a woman who is unlawful for him."[55]

4) Zurarah has narrated that Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Allah is not worshipped by any prayer higher than protecting the stomach and private parts from what is unlawful."[56]

5) The Prophet (S) said:

"The cause that would send my people to Hell is mostly the two hollow limbs, one of which is the stomach and the other is the pudendum (meaning fornication and the lack of chastity)."[57]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 8

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

8. "And those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant, "

Another outstanding attribute of the believers here is safeguarding their trusts, with the vast meaning of the word. This includes keeping their promises and pledges both towards the Creator and towards mankind.

The broad concept of ‘trust’ covers the trusts of Allah and the prophets as well as that of people in general. Each one of Allah’s various blessings is one of His trusts.

The religion of the Truth, the Heavenly Books, the teachings and practical instructions of the leaders of the Path of Truth, ones’ possessions, offspring, the responsibilities to which one has been assigned and the social positions we have been given are all His trusts which the believers endeavor to fulfil and give their due.

The believers guard these trusts while they are alive, and when they are close to departing this world, they entrust them to the future generations they have trained to maintain them. All material, spiritual, and political blessings are Divine trusts.[58]

The concept of ‘trust’ is general, here, and its evidence is the vastness and absoluteness of the word trust, in addition to the existence of numerous narrations that interpret the meaning of trust. Trust is sometimes interpreted as ‘the Imamate of the Infallible Imams’, which every Imam entrusts to the next Imam, and sometimes it is interpreted as their absolute guardianship and government.[59]

It is interesting that Zurarah, who was one of the greatest disciples of Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as), says that the purpose of the sentence:

‘…that you restore deposits to their owners…’[60]

is to restore guardianship and government to its due people, i.e. those entitled to it.[61]

This shows that government is an important deposit that must be restored to its true owners.

The verse says:

“And those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant, ”

General meanigs for the concepts of covenant and promise can also be found in other verses of the Holy Qur’an, for example, one verse says:

“Fulfil you the covenant of Allah when you make covenant.”[62]

Interestingly, in some verses of the Holy Qur’an we find that the phrases ‘restoration of deposits’and ‘respecting trusts’ include both safeguarding them and restoring them to their owners.

Therefore, if the failure to protect something that is held in trust results in damaging it or placing it in danger, the trustee should make an effort to correct it. (So, there are three tasks to be done: restoration, protection, and correction.)

At any rate, being faithful to one’s covenants, protecting them and restoring deposits to their owners are important foundations of the social system of human beings. Without them disorder would occur in the

society.

This is why even individuals and nations that have no Divine and religious beliefs, bind themselves to fulfilling these obligations, at least, in society in order to protect it against the disorder that would result from breaches of trusts and covenants.

The Importance of Trust in Narrations

1) During the last moments of his life in this world, the holy Prophet (S) told Imam Ali (as):

"Restore the deposit to its depositor (its owner), whether he is righteous or a wrongdoer, and whether it is valuable or worthless, even if it is a thread, a cloth or a sewn garment."[63]

2) Imam Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

"The supreme faith is trustworthiness, and the most indecent of morals is treachery."[64]

3) Imam Ali (as) said:

"Do not betray someone who has entrusted something to you, even though he has betrayed you. And do not make known his secrets, although he has revealed yours."[65]

4) The Prophet (S) said:

"If someone commits a breach of trust in the world and does not restore the deposit to the depositor and then he dies, he has died as one disbelieves in my religion, and he will find Allah angry with him."[66]

5) The Prophet (S) said:

"One who is negligent with his trusts and consequently damages the deposit is not one of us."[67]

6) Imam Ali (as) said:

"One who commits a breach of trust is not faithful."[68]

7) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Allah has appointed no prophet unless he is veracious and restores deposits to the good and the bad."[69]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 9

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَي صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

9. "And those who take care of their prayers, "

The most prominent characteristic and demeanour of the believers is the first thing mentioned in the Sura, their attitude to the ritual prayer, when it says that the believers are they:

"Who are humble in their prayer."

This attribute is again mentioned when it says:

"And those who take care of their prayers."

Thus the Sura emphasizes both the role and effect of the ritual prayer, which is as a sign for its importance, and the verse, as the last specialty of the believers, here, says:

"And those who take care of their prayers, "

It is interesting that the primary attribute of the believers is 'humility in ritual prayer' and their final attribute has been counted 'paying attention to their prayers'. Their attributes start with the ritual prayer and end with the ritual prayer, because the ritual prayer is the most important relation between the Creator and mankind.

The ritual prayer is the supreme school of training the self. It is the means towards awareness of the soul and heart and insures man against sin. In short, if ritual prayer is one with all its rites, it will be a certain ground for all goodness and righteous deeds.

It is also necessary to mention that the first holy verse concerning the believers' qualities and this very verse are different from each other from the point of the matter. That is why in the first verse 'Salat' (prayer) is used in the singular form and in this verse it is used in the plural form.

The first one refers to humility and a special inward attitude which is the spirit of ritual prayer and affects the whole entity. The recent verse focuses upon the discipline and the conditions for the performance of the prayers, which include the time, place, and the number of the ritual prayers.

Here, the true believers are recommended to observe all the disciplines and conditions necessary for all the ritual prayers.

The Extraordinary Importance of the Ritual Prayers

Numerous narrations have been narrated from the Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as) recorded about these holy verses containing some expressive meanings that unveil the extraordinary importance of the ritual prayer in the religion of Islam.

Abu 'Uthman said:

"I was sitting with Salman Farsi under a tree, when he grasped a dry branch and shook it so that all the leaves on it fell off. Then he told me: "You did not ask me why I did that." I asked him to tell me what his intention was for doing so. He said: "This was the same action the Prophet (S) performed when I was sitting beside him under a tree. There, the Prophet (S) asked me: 'Wouldn't you ask me why I did this, Salman?' I asked him to tell me why. He said: 'When a Muslim does his ritual ablutions and then performs the five ritual prayers, all his sins will fall away as the leaves of this branch'."[70]

In another tradition, Abu 'Umamah said:

"Once we were sitting with the Prophet (S) in a mosque, when a man came and said:'O Messenger of Allah, I have committed a sin, for which a fixed punishment is prescribed upon me. Please execute it on me.' The Prophet (S) said: 'Did you perform the ritual prayer with us?'.The man said: 'Yes, O Messenger of Allah'. The Prophet said: 'So Allah has forgiven your sin and removed your prescribed punishment'."[71]

Also it is narrated that Imam Ali (as) said:

"We were waiting with the Prophet (S) for the ritual prayer, when a man stood up and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! I have committed a sin.' The Prophet (S) turned his face away from him, and when the ritual prayer was finished, the same man stood up and repeated what he had said before. The Prophet (S) said: 'Did not you perform this ritual prayer along with us? Did you not perform its ritual ablution well?" He said: 'Yes.' The Prophet (S) said: 'This is the penance for your sin'."[72]

Again it has been narrated that Imam Ali (as) quoted from the Prophet (S) who said:

"The five ritual prayers for my Ummah are like a stream of flowing water placed in front of the door of each of your house. Suppose one of you has dirt on his body and takes a bath in it five times a day, would any dirt remain on his body? Of course not! The five ritual prayers are such for my Ummah (people)."[73]

There is no doubt, however, that when the ritual prayer is performed and its conditions are observed, it immerses man in a world of spirituality and devotion, which make his links with Allah so strong that all the impurities and effects of sins are washed away from the heart and the soul.

The ritual prayer insures man against sin and it removes the rust of sin from the mirror of the heart.

The ritual prayer causes the seeds of man's noble habits to germinate in the depths of his soul. The ritual prayer, indeed, strengthens the will, purifies the heart, and cleanses the soul. Thus, if the ritual prayer is not like a body without a soul, then it can be the supreme school of training the self.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 10-11

أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ

الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

10. "These, they are the heirs, "
11. "Those who will inherit the Paradise: Therein they will abide."

The Arabic word 'Firdaus', meaning garden, is the best place in Paradise.74

After mentioning the most distinguished attributes of the believers, the Qur'an implies that their destiny is that they will be the heirs who will inherit Paradise and abide there eternally.

The verse says:

"These, they are the heirs, "

However, 'Firdaus', as some philologists say, is a Roman word, while some others say it is Arabic, and some say that it is originally a Persian word meaning a garden. In this case, it is a special garden in which all the Divine blessings and favours are gathered. Hence it can be called 'the Lofty Paradise', which is the best and the most elevated gardens of Heaven.

Using the word 'inherit' may indicate that the believers gain it without difficulty, like how one gets an inheritance, in so far as man achieves this favour without any trouble or exertion.

Of course attaining the high stations of Paradise needs self-edification, purification and struggle, but the great recompense in comparison, makes these efforts look as if they were nothing, that the believer had achieved it without facing any pain.

It is necessary to note that the Prophet (S) has been quoted to have said:

"Every one of you, without exception, has two abodes, one in the Hell and other in Paradise. If a person dies and goes to Hell, his abode in Paradise will be inherited by the people of Paradise."

This tradition might explain the context in which the word 'inheritance' in the verse under discussion might apply.

Some interpreters are also of the opinion that it is not improbable that the use of the word 'inheritance' refers to the destiny of the believers, like heritage which finally accrues to the heir.

The literal meaning of the text indicates that this exalted station of Paradise is exclusive for the believers who possess the attributes enumerated above. Thus, the other people of Paradise dwell in lower stations.

Some Narrations on Paradise

1) The holy Prophet (S) says:

“Whoever longs for Paradise must endeavour to do good deeds.”[75]

2) Imam Sajjad, Zayn-ul-‘abidin, (as) said:

“Be aware that whoever is eager for Paradise hastens to do good and shuns sensual desires. And whoever fears the Fire repents of his sins before Allah’s presence and shuns what is unlawful.”[76]

3) Imam Ali (as) said:

“Paradise is the best of goals.”[77]

4) Imam Ali (as) said:

“Paradise is the destiny of those who are successful.”[78]

5) Imam Ali (as) said:

“Paradise is the abode of peace (and comfort).”[79]

6) Imam Ali (as) said:

“Paradise is the recompense for those who obey (Allah’s commandments).”[80]

7) The Prophet (S) said:

“If you promise to fulfil six virtuous acts I promise you will have Paradise: perform the ritual prayer, pay the alms-tax, restore deposits to their owners, uphold the privity parts, and be careful about your language and your stomach.”[81]

8) The Prophet (S) said:

“One who dies while he believes that Allah is True will enter Paradise.”[82]

9) The Prophet (S) said:

“Never enters Paradise but the one who is Muslim.”[83]

10) The Prophet (S) said:

“In Paradise there are things (blessings), that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and which have never occurred to the mind.”[84]

11) Imam Ali (as) said:

“Only Paradise is your price and value, so sell yourself for nothing less than that .”[85]

12) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“One who recites ‘La-’Ilaha Illa-Lah’ sincerely will enter Paradise. And his sincerity means that this noble sentence dissuades one from committing the prohibited things of Allah.”[86]

13) Imam Kazim (as) said:

“Three persons are barred from Paradise: the gossiper, the alcoholic, and the libertine, and he is a mischievous man.”[87]

14) The Prophet (S) said:

“A deceiver and a betrayer will not enter Paradise.”

And he also said:

“A cursed child and a drunkard will not enter Paradise.”[88]

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verses 12-13

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الإِنسَانَ مِن سُلاَلَةٍ مِن طِينٍ

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ

12. “And certainly We created man from an extract of clay, ”
13. “Then We placed him (as a drop of) sperm in a safe lodging;”

The Arabic word /sulalah/ means an extract of something. The Qur’anic word /alaqah/ means clotted thick blood. The word /mudqah/ means a piece pf boneless meat.

After mentioning the characteristics of real believers and the vast and unique rewards in store for them through former verses, the faithful reader is motivated to join their ranks, but how is this possible?

These revelations and a part of the following holy verses illustrate one of the main ways of achieving faith and gnosis. First man is encouraged to discover and contemplate the wonders of the human body

and its genesis.

Through some verses, which will be recited later, the Qur’an attracts the man’s attention to outside secrets of the wonderful beings of the world of existence, the exterior world of the macrocosm. He must try to see the wonders of creation in the microcosm of his being, too. It says:

“And certainly We created man from an extract of clay, ”

Thus, the first step is to meditate upon how man, the best and chosen of all creatures with all his greatness, talents and excellent characteristics had been created from the humble earth. The existence of man himself is a testimony to Allah’s awesome power for He created such a complex and amazing creature from such a simple substance.

The next verse, adds:

“Then We placed him (as a drop of) sperm in a safe lodging;”

In fact, verse 12 speaks about the origin of all mankind as the offspring of Adam. Everyone has been created from wet earth and everyone returns to it in the end. This verse, however, speaks about the continuation of the human species through the process of insemination, which is the combination of the male and female seeds, and fetal development in the womb.

This subject is mentioned in other parts of the Qur’an, for example, in verses 7 and 8 of Sura As-Sajdah the Qur’an says:

“…He began the creation of man with clay, then made his progeny from a draught of despised fluid.”

The verse under discussion describes the womb as /qararin makin/ (meaning a safe and a secure residence) and refers to the particular position of the womb in the human body.Indeed, the womb is located in one of the most secure places of the body.

It is fully protected on all sides with the spine and ribcage at the back and the pelvic bone embracing the front and two sides. In addition to this, layers of abdominal muscles, and hands as well, provide additional protection. Thus the womb provides a safe and nurturing place for the conception and development of a child.

However, mother has different kinds of movements, but her womb is a secure place for the child, yet all the stages of creation, of course, are under His control.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verse 14

ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَاماً فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْماً ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقاً ءَاخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

14. "Then We created of the sperm a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh; thereafter We produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators!"

This verse points out to the wonderful process of embryo gestation in the mother's womb and different states of creation which appear one after another in that secure place that up until very recently remained hidden from our eyes and beyond the reach of human interference.

It says:

"Then We created of the sperm a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh..."

The stage of being a sperm and these four subsequent stages comprise five stages of development of the human embryo. Each stage itself is so wonderful that in the field of embryology it has been the subject of a great deal of research and opinion and many good books have been written about it.

What is even more amazing than the actual stages of the development of the fetus in the womb is the fact that the Holy Qur'an had mentioned these different stages and marvels of embryonic development when the science of embryology did not yet exist and intimate knowledge of the human body was primitive to say the least.

The verse mentions the last and the most important stage of human creation with a meaningful phrase:

"...thereafter We produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators!"

Blessed be that Unique Power that draws such an unprecedented and marvelous picture with a drop of liquid in the dark room of the womb.

Blessed be that Knowledge and Wisdom that creates all those talents, capabilities and potentials in such an apparently insignificant creature. Glorified be Him (s.w.t.) for His unique creation.

Also we must be aware that the Arabic word /xaliq/ is derived from the word /xalq/, which originally means measuring. When a piece of leather is measured for cutting, an Arab speaker would use the word /xalq/. Since in creation the issue of measurement is more important than anything else, the word /xalq/ has been used to refer to it.

The usage of the phrase 'the Best of the creators' raises the question: Is there another creator other than Allah?

Some of interpreters have offered different justifications for this verse, but these explanations are not necessary. The word /xalq/, meaning measurement and creation, is true for beings other than Allah, but Allah's creating is different from the creation accomplished by others in many respects.

Allah creates the substance and the form of things, while if man intends to create something, he can only give a new form to it using the existing materials of this world as its substance. For example, he can build a house with brick and wood and produce a car with iron and steel.

Another difference is that Allah's creations are unlimited in number;

"He is the Creator of all things..."*[89]*,

but man's creations are very limited. Man, as a creator, often exhibits his deficiencies and weaknesses in the things that he creates which must be corrected and completed during the course of their creation and action. Allah's creations, on the other hand, have no faults and deficiencies within their own parameters.

When man is able to create something, this ability is by Allah's permission and command, for without His permission no leaf can stir on a tree.

We read about Jesus (as) in Sura Al- Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 110:

"...and when you did make of clay (a thing) like the shape of a bird by My permission..."

The Following Points Should Be Noted:

1- The Arabic word /xalq/ is used to describe creation during the five stages of the embryonic development of man in the above mentioned verse. When the process has reached its last stage, however, and a complete and independent being which the verse terms 'another creation' is formed, the Qur'anic word /ansha'a/ is used.

This word, as philologists have said, means 'to create something along with providing its education and training.' This word shows that the last stage is completely different from the previous stages. This is a consequential stage that the Holy Qur'an mentions generally and not in detail.

It says only:

"...thereafter We produced it as another creation..."

and immediately following it the Qur'an says:

"...So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators".

This final stage is the most important one. This is the stage when the embryo becomes a fully formed

human being and which becomes conscious and can move and feel. In Islamic narrations, this phase is called the phase of 'emoulment', that is the breathing of the soul into the body.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

*"The purpose of /xalqan 'axar/ is the breathing of the soul into the body."*90

In this stage, man leaves vegetative life far behind and with a great movement steps into the world of animals and more importantly into the world of humanity. This stage is so far away from the previous one that using the Qur'anic phrase 'thumma khalaqna' would have been inadequate to comment on it, so the phrase 'humma ansha'na' was used.

It is in this stage that man is graced with a special structure that distinguishes him from the rest of creation in the world. It gives him the competence to be the vicegerent of Allah in the earth, a responsibility that the mountains and skies could not bear. Indeed Allah truly deserves the praise,

"…So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators."

All of the realities of the macrocosm with all its wonders become reflected in the form and content of this 'small body' on its physical completion. In this context, Imam Ali (as) said:

*"Do you suppose that you are only a small body, while the macrocosm is placed within you?"*91

In other words, you are an exemplar of the world of existence.

2- The writer of the commentary 'fi Zilal' makes an interesting statement in interpreting this verse, he says:

"When the embryo passes the stages where it appears as a blood-clot and as a lump, many of its cells change into bony ones, then gradually they are covered by flesh and muscles. Therefore, the sentence:

"then clothed the bones with flesh"

is a scientific miracle of which no one in the age when the Qur'an was sent down was aware. The Holy Qur'an does not say: We changed the lump into bones and flesh, but it says:

"Then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh."

This indicates that the lump is at first changed into bones and then it is covered by flesh. Therefore, man was ugly, exactly like a skeleton, and thus it became beautiful.

Furthermore, just as garments protect the body, muscles protect the bones.

If there were no muscles, blows landed on the body would constantly hurt the bones or they would easily

break. Moreover, just like a garment protects the human body against heat and cold, the flesh protects the bones, the real pillars of body. These all show how precisely the Holy Qur'an chooses its sentences and phrases."

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 15-16

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُم بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ لَمَيِّتُونَ

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ

15. "Then verily after that you shall die."
16. "Then verily on the Day of Resurrection you will beraised, (again)."

In these verses Allah shows us that death is certain and definite. Here it will be appropriate to mention a part of one of the sermons of Imam Ali (as) on this subject:

"If there was anyone who could secure a ladder to everlasting life or a way to avoid death it was Sulayman ibn Dawud (as) who was given control over the jinn and men along with prophethood and a great position (before Allah).

But when he finished what was his due in sustenance (in this world) and exhausted his time, the bow of destruction shot him with the arrow of death."[92]

The previous holy verse had mentioned the stages of the development of man for which Allah admired Himself. These two verses talk about the final stages of perfection after death. After touching on the subject of monotheism and the origin of man, the issue of resurrection is mentioned in a very delicate and beautiful way.

The verse implies that man, with all his marvels and wonders, cannot live eternally in this world and a time must come when this marvelous structure will fall apart. So, the verse says:

"Then verily after that you shall die."

Some Narrations On Death

1) The Prophet (S) said:

"Death is like a bunch of fragrant flowers for the believer."[93]

2) The Prophet (S) said:

“How beneficial is death for those who have made faith and piety the practice of their hearts.”[94]

3) Imam Ali (as) said:

“Death is the cause of tranquility for the prosperous.”[95]

4) Imam Hadi (as) said;

“Remember when you will be lying on the bed of death before your household and neither can any physician prevent your death nor can any friend help you.”[96]

5) The Prophet (S) said:

“Unexpected death is a relief for the believers and a wrath for the unbelievers.”[97]

The next verse means that death is not destruction but a stage of perfection. Therefore, in order to neutralize the idea that when a person dies, (and therefore, everything ends which would make the magnificence of his creation pointless,) Allah immediately says afterwards:

“Then verily on the Day of Resurrection you will be raised (again).”

It is interesting that in the above-mentioned verses, the same reason that is used to prove the veracity of the Resurrection as has been applied at the beginning of Holy Sura Al-Hajj No. 22, [98] is also used to prove the existence of Allah, His power and His grandeur.

They all begin with citing the various stages of human creation in the world of the embryo and after that they progress to the subject of the Resurrection.

Allah’s grandeur can be acknowledged in the mystery of man’s creation, his transformation in the hidden sanctuary of the womb, where he is given a form and shape as if a group of skilful painters, craftsmen and skilled geniuses sat around this drop of mingled sperm and egg water and worked day and night to ever so delicately, lead this tiny, insignificant particle through the various stages and passages of life in a very short time.

If we could film the entire process of an embryo’s development, we might be able to understand what wonders and marvels are hidden in this phenomenon.

The extraordinary advancement of embryology in our age and the ever-increasing research of scientists upon this matter, plus their experiences in laboratories, have revealed many things. When man sees the result of these researches, he would involuntarily whisper the Qur’anic words which says:

“So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators.”[99]

The successive creations, on the other hand, that come into existence and find new forms every day,

and the creation of man from a small mingled drop of water all basically express Allah's power over the matter and support the fact of His power to resurrect man and bring him back to a new life.

Thus, by expressing one reason, two aims are achieved, proof for the divine power of Allah and proof for the existence of the Resurrection.

Some Traditions Concerning the Day of Resurrection

1) Once Imam Ali (as) went to the market of Basrah and saw that people were so engaged in transactions that it seemed that they had forgotten themselves and had ignored human goals. When he saw this, he was so deeply affected that he wept heavily.

Then, addressing those people said:

"O' slaves of the world and agents of the people of the world! you who are busy with business and swearing during the day and sleep at nights on your beds ignorantly and forgetting the Day of Resurrection and Reckoning! when will you make yourselves prepared for the journey that is in the near future? Have you taken provisions for it? When do you ponder over the Day of Resurrection and think about the Hereafter?"[100]

2) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Verily the first things that a servant will be asked about before Allah (Glory be to His Majesty) on the Day of Resurrection are as follows:

1- The obligatory ritual prayers

2- The obligatory alms-tax on possessions

3- The obligatory fasts

4- The obligatory Hajj pilgrimage

5- The friendship and guardianship of us, Ahl-ul-Bayt (the Prophet's family)

If the servant acknowledges our guardianship at the time of his departure and dies while believing in our guardianship, his ritual prayer, alms-tax, fasting and pilgrimage will be accepted (of course, if they were done correctly)."[101]

3) Somebody asked Imam Ali (as) that how Allah reckons the deeds of people while they are so many?

He said:

"Just as He provides for them their sustenance in their numbers."[102]

4) The Prophet (S) said:

"Be aware that you are living in a day that is the day of deeds and not the Day of Reckoning. Wait for the day that is the Day of Reckoning and on that Day there will be no deed (that you can do)."[103]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 17

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَآئِقَ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غَافِلِينَ

17. "And We have created above you seven paths, and We are never unmindful of (Our) creation."

Perhaps the objective of the Arabic word /tara'iq/ here is the paths of the angels or the paths and orbits of the planets. Maybe its purpose is the seven heavens that are linked to each other.

The previous verses brought up the creation of man while this verse is about the creation of the skies. After mentioning the signs in the microcosm, which are the signs of Allah's grandeur in the entities of our beings, the Holy Qur'an now proceeds to touch upon the signs in the macrocosm and reflects upon the grandeur of creation in the heavens and the earth.

First, it says:

"And We have created above you seven paths, .."

The Arabic word /tara'iq/ is the plural form of the word /tariqah/, which means a path or a level. If we take the first meaning into consideration, the content of the verse would mean that Allah has created above us seven paths.

Perhaps these paths are for the coming and going of the angels, or they are the orbits of the planets. If we take the second meaning into consideration, the holy verse would mean that Allah has created above us seven levels i.e., seven heavens.

We have already spoken at length on this topic. What is important to note here is that if we take the number seven as symbolic of numerousness, thus the noble verse will mean that there are countless universes, planets and stars above us.

We must not confuse the meaning of the word /tariqah/ as an orbit with the Ptolemaic system of the universe in which the planetary spheres lie above each other like the layers of an onion.

We must not imagine that the Holy Qur'an is based upon this wrong theory. Paths and levels indicate other worlds located within different distances away from our world, and in proportion to us, each one is located above the other, some are near and others far.

If we interpret the number seven literally, it would mean that with the exception of this universe (this realm of planets, stars and galaxies) that we can observe, there are six universes above it to which human knowledge has yet to attain.

When we look carefully at the map of the solar system and the location of the planets, we can find another interpretation for this verse.

Two of the nine planets orbiting the sun, that is, the orbits of the two planets, Mercury and Venus, are below the orbit of the earth, i.e., they are closer to the sun, while the orbits of the other six planets are above that of the earth and as such, they are like levels placed one above the other.

When we add the orbit of the moon around the earth to that number, the seven orbits or levels become complete.

The expanse and grandeur number of the heavenly bodies and their paths may give the illusion that Allah could never be aware of all of them, so immediately at the end of the verse the Qur'an says:

"...and We are never unmindful of (Our) creation."

The emphasis on the word 'creation' here indicates that creation is in itself an expression of Allah's knowledge and mindfulness. Can the Creator be possibly unmindful of His creation?

There is another probable interpretation of this verse and that is that He created many paths for the angels above us, He is not ignorant of us, and His angels also observe and watch our deeds.

Allah is both the Creator and the Observer. The universe is Allah's presence.

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verse 18

وَأَنزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنَّاهُ فِي الأَرْضِ وَإِنَّا عَلَي ذَهَابٍ بِهِ لَقَادِرُونَ

18. "And We sent down water from the sky in measure, and We lodged it in the earth, and verily We are able to take it away"

Allah is equally able to grant and remove His blessings. Like each item of His creation, every drop of rain has been determined and it is not an aimless natural phenomenon without a plan.

(***"...in measure..."***).

Rain is counted as one of the Divine blessings bestowed from sky upon the earth and is mentioned in this noble verse as another manifestation of Allah's power. The verse says:

"And We sent down water from the sky in measure, .."

The water of rain usually is not so abundant that it would cause floods, nor is it so scanty that it would not be able to adequately satisfy plants and animals.

After the heavens from which life giving water descends, the earth is the next source of life upon which all living creatures depend and is one of the most important blessings of Allah. Then, the verse refers to a more important issue in this connection which is the storage of water in the ground.

The verse continues saying:

"...and We lodged it in the earth, and verily We are able to take it away"

We know that the outward crust of the earth consists of two layers: the permeable and the impermeable. If all of the earth's crust were permeable, water from rains, even from thelong continued rains, would immediately seep into the depths of the earth and everywhere would remain dry.

If the entire crust were impermeable like mud or clay, all the water would remain on the surface of the earth and could become contaminated and malodorous, becoming a source of death and sickness instead of being a source of life.

However, the great and beneficent Allah has made the upper layer permeable and the lower layer impermeable, so that the water can go into the earth and be contained by the impermeable layer. Later the water, unpolluted and pure, would become available as springs, wells and subterranean canals.

The refreshing and wholesome water we obtain from deep wells and consume is possibly the result of rains that had fallen many years ago and had been saved underground without pollution for today's use.

However, He Who has created man to live on this earth and has simply made water the most important element for his survival, has also created many important means to collect and safeguard it even before the appearance of man.

Some of these reserves of water are on high mountains in the form of snow and ice. They melt every year and flow down as streams and rivers, and sometimes they remain for hundreds or thousands years on mountaintops until the commandment for them to descend is issued thus irrigating the dry lands.

However, the word 'fi' (within) in the Qur'anic phrase /fil'ard / (within the ground), points to the possibility that the verse indicates underground sources of water, not sources that are above the ground.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 19

فَأَنشَأْنَا لَكُم بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ مِن نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ لَّكُمْ فِيهَا فَوَاكِهُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

19. "Then We produced for you therewith gardens of date palms and grapes, wherein is much

fruit for you and whereof you eat;"

Plants and trees are created for human use. Among the fruits, some of them, like the date and the grape are special. The Wise Allah, of cause, by providing us with fruits from the soil, has supplied man with his material needs.

Therefore, after mentioning rain, this abundant blessing, the Qur'an continues by enumerating the results of rainfall in this noble verse:

"Then We produced for you therewith gardens of date palms and grapes, wherein is much fruit for you and whereof you eat;"

Dates and grapes are not the only products of cultivation for there are many other fruits and plants cultivated in gardens, but they are among the most valuable of them.

The Qur'anic sentence /wa minha ta'kulun/,

(***"...and whereof you eat;"***),

probably indicates that the products of these gardens include fruits that are both edible, as a part of it, and other things that are inedible.

Plants (including palm gardens) have often manifold uses for human life; their leaves are used to make carpets and sometimes garments, or used for forage, their wood is used to build houses and for fuel, and the leaves, fruits and the roots of some of trees are used to make medicines.

Fakhr-i-Razi has said in his commentary that the probable purpose of the sentence 'minha ta'kulun' is that our lives and provisions are determined by these gardens, just as we say that such and such person lives by doing such and such a job.

It is also worth mentioning that in the verses above, the origin of man's life is the sperm drop and the origin of plant life is rain. In fact, these two distinguished examples of life are both originated from water. Allah's law is one and covers all things.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 20

وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِن طُورِ سَيْنَآءَ تَنبُتُ بِالدُّهْنِ وَصِبْغٍ لِّلْأَكِلِينَ

20. "And a tree springing out of Mount Sinai, which produces oil and seasoning for those who eat."

Every climatic and geographical area is suitable for a special type of vegetation,

“...a tree springing out of Mount Sinai...”.

Some places are spiritually and materially blessed. Mount Sinai, for example, is the place where Divine revelation had descended and where the olive tree grows, the oil of which is a Divine blessing.

The verse refers to a blessed tree, the olive that grows because of this very rain. It implies that in addition to gardens of date palm, grapevines and other fruits, Allah has created a tree that grows on Mount Sinai.

The verse says:

“And a tree springing out of Mount Sinai, which produces oil and seasoning for those who eat.”

The interpreters of the Qur’an suggest two probabilities why Mount Sinai is mentioned:

1) It refers to Mount Sinai itself in the desert of Sinai. The Holy Qur’an has described the olive tree as a tree that grows on Mount Sinai because when the Arabs of Hijaz traveled through the dry deserts of this area going towards the north, the first area where they saw the olive tree laden with fruit was on Mount Sinai, which is in the south of the Sinai desert. Studying a map makes this matter quite obvious.

2) Mount Sinai (Tur) is a descriptive word meaning a ‘blessed, wooded or scenic mountain’ (for ‘Tur’ means mountain and ‘Sina’ means blessed, scenic and full of tree)

The Arabic word /sibq/ originally means colour, but since when man eats his bread with a sauce he usually makes it colourful, all kinds of loaves of bread eaten with sauce have been called /sibq/.

Anyway, the word /sibq/ may refer to the very olive oil that is eaten with bread and to all kinds of bread whose sauce is made from other plants.

The question that comes up here is why among all the various kinds of fruit the emphasis is especially placed on these three fruits: date, grape and olive?

When we look at the research done by nutritionists, we see that there are few fruits as beneficial and effective for the human body as these three fruits are.

Olive oil is very valuable for the metabolism of the body. It is high in calories and beneficial for the liver. It removes illnesses of the kidneys, is good for gallstones, and renal colic. It strengthens the nerves and is the elixir of health.

There are so many beneficial effects of the date that we can only mention some of them briefly here. Nutritionists say that the date is abundant in sugar, which is one of the healthiest sugars available.Eating dates can prevent cancer and scientists have discovered thirteen vital materials and five vitamins in it, which make it a very valuable source of nutrition.

In the opinion of some scientists the grape is a natural pharmacy. It has properties like those of milk, it produces twice as much heat in the body as meat. It refines the blood. It removes poisons from the body and its various vitamins give power and strength to the body.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 21-22

وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً نُسْقِيكُم مِّمَّا فِي بُطُونِهَا وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَي الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ

21. "And verily there is a lesson for you in the cattle. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, and you have many benefits in them, and of them you eat."
22. "And on them, and on the ships, advantages you are carried."

Quadrupeds are created for the use of man. They provide us with milk, meat, and transport. These benefits, which are a part of their effects, also encourage the development of dairy, leather, meat, weaving industries and also providing job opportunities for millions of people.

Thus, after mentioning the blessing of plants that grow because of the beneficial rain, Allah turns our attention to the animals that thrive because they feed on these plants as an important part of His blessings and favours to man, where it says:

"And verily there is a lesson for you in the cattle..."

Then the Holy Qur'an explains this sentence, where it says:

"...We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies..."

Yes, refreshing milk! This perfect and strengthening food is produced from the body of an animal from its blood and the like. It is truly amazing how Allah could produce such a pleasant and wholesome drink from such a thing.

But the lesson and blessings of animals are not solely confined to milk, they have other benefits for human beings as well:

"...and you have many benefits in them, and of them you eat."

In addition to meat, which, as a source of protein, is a major source of nutrition necessary for the body when used in moderation, animals also produce leather, which is used for making different kinds of garments and durable materials.

Various types of clothing, carpets and covers are made from wool. Some of the limbs of animals are sometimes used to make medicines. Even their feces are used to make fertilizers for trees and are important in farming.

In the next verse, animals are introduced as easy-paced vehicles of man for traveling on land just as ships are used for traveling on the sea. The verse says:

“And on them, and on the ships, advantages you are carried.”

These are all the benefits and advantages of animals that accrue to man which are indeed a lesson for him to take heed. They make us become familiar with the Creator of all these blessings and encourage within us the sense of gratitude towards Him.

However, why did Allah put animals and ships on the same level? If we study this matter carefully its answer is clear: Man needs vehicles to travel everywhere on the earth. Beside those vehicles for land, Allah also mentions marine vehicles or ships. In actual fact, this sentence is like what was said about the blessings of the children of Adam in verse seven of Sura 'Isra':

“…We carried them on the land and the sea…”

Therefore, we must not trifle with the role of ships in transportation.

“...and on the ships you are carried”.

Some Traditions Upon Milk

1. The holy Prophet (S) said:

“Verily Allah did not appoint any sickness but he appointed a healing for it. Then behold of the milk of cow which is better than any tree.”[104]

2. The holy Prophet (S) said:

“Behold of the milk of cow which is better than any tree, and it is the healing of every sickness.”[105]

3. The holy Prophet said:

“Behold of the milk of cow since verily it is a medicine and its oil is a healing, and avoid of its meat since it is sickness.”[106]

4. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

“The pap of milk (made of ground rice, milk and sugar) is a healing for every sickness save death.”[107]

5. 'Isma'il-ibn-Muslim narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

“The Messenger of Allah (S) prohibited mixing water with milk when selling it.”[108]

1. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 183
2. Sura Ta Ha, No. 20, verse 64
3. Sura Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 77
4. Sura Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, verse 8
5. Sura Al-Hashr, No. 59, verse 9
6. Sura Al-Mujadala, No. 58, verse 22
7. Sura Al-Anfal, No. 8, verse 45
8. Sura Al-Ma’idah, No. 5, verse 100
9. Sura Al-Ma’idah, No. 5, verse 35
10. Sura An-Nur, No. 24, verse 31
11. Qurar-ul-Hikam, 8357, 2309
12. Ibid
13. Al-Durr-ul-Manthur, Vol. 2, p. 724
14. Nahj ul-Balaqah, sermon 5
15. Safi, The Commentary, Vol. 3, p.393
16. Safi and majma‘-ul-Bayan, The Commentary
17. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, Vol. 7, p. 526
18. Tuhaf-ul-‘Uqul, p. 600
19. Muntakhab-ul-Qurar, p. 466
20. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 2, p. 695
21. Mustadrak-ul-Wasa’il, Vol. 1, p. 10
22. Sura Al-Qassas, No. 28, verses 52-55
23. Saduq’s Amali, 28, 4
24. Al-Bihar, 74, 167, 32
25. Al-’Ikhtisas, 230
26. Al-Bihar, 78, 204, 042
27. Al-Bihar, 92, 294, 6
28. Tuhaf ul-‘Uqul, 218
29. Tanbih-ul-Khawatir, 116, 2
30. Qurar-ul-Hikam, 5290, 1982
31. Al-Bihar, 78, 92, 101
32. Saduq’s ’Amaly, 4, 28
33. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, Vol. 77, p. 407
34. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, Vol. 68, p. 386
35. Kitab-ul-Imam-us-Sadiq, Asad Heydar, Vol. 44, p. 361
36. Al-Mustatraf, Vol. 1, p.9
37. Wasa’il ush-Shi’ah, Vol. 6, p. 15
38. Kanz ul-‘Ummal, Vol. 6, p. 527, No. 16837
39. Wasa’il ush-Shi’ah, Vol. 6, p. 6
40. Wasa’il ush-Shi’ah, Vol. 6, p. 40
41. ’Ihtijaj, 99
42. Rawzat ul-Wa’izin, 418
43. Bihar, Vol. 93, p. 14
44. Bihar, Vol. 93, p. 11
45. Bihar, Vol. 96, p. 22
46. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 183

47. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 93, p. 14
48. Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p. 14
49. Mizan ul-Hikmah, Vol. 4, p. 221
50. Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p. 36
51. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 56
52. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 66
53. Refer to the famous history by Will Durant
54. Kafi, Ma'ani ul- Akhbar
55. Kafi, and Al-Mahasin
56. Kafi, Vol. 3
57. Kafi, Vol. 3
58. Imam Khomeyni, may his spirit be sanctified, has said that the Islamic Republic is a Divine trust
59. Burhan; the Commentary, Vol. 1, p. 380
60. Sura An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 58
61. Burhan, the Commenyary, Vol. 1, p. 380
62. Sura An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 91
63. Bihar, Vol. 77, p. 273
64. Qurar ul-Hikam, 2905-2906
65. Al-Bihar, 77, 208, 1
66. 'Amali us-Saduq 350 / 1
67. Al-Bihar, 75, 172, 13
68. Qurar ul-Hikam, 7932, 1582, 4053, 2083
69. Kafi, Vol. 3
70. Majma' ul-Bayan, Vol. 124, p. 141
71. Ibid
72. Ibid
73. Kanzul-'Ummal, Vol. 7, tradition No. 18931, and Majma' ul-Bayan, following verse 14 of Sura Hud, No. 11
74. Durr ul Manthur, The Commentary
75. Mizan ul-Hikmah, Vol. 2, No. 2520
76. Yuhaf ul-'Uqul, 281, No. 2521
77. Qurar ul-Hikam, No. 2522
78. Ibid, No. 2523
79. Ibid, No. 2524
80. Ibid, No. 2525
81. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 14, p. 893
82. Tawhid Saduq, p. 29
83. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 1, p. 79
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85. Tawhid Saduq, p. 29
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87. Thwab ul'A'mal, Vol. 3, p. 262
88. Kanz ul-'Ummal, 43776-43777
89. Sura Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 16
90. Nur uth-Thaqalayn, The Commentary
91. Diwan, by Qutb-ud-Din Abul-Hassan Muhammad Beyhaqy Neyshabury Keydary, a scholar in the 6th century A.H His Diwan is translated by Dr. Abul-Qasim Imamy. P.236
92. Nahj ul Balaghah, Sermon 182
93. Kanz ul-'Ummal, tradition No. 42355

94. Ibid
95. Qurar ul-Hikam, p. 6502
96. Al-Bihar, 78/370/4
97. Kanz ul-'Ummal, tradition No. 42775
98. vs. 5-7
99. The current Sura, verse 14
100. Safinat ul-Bihar, Vol. 1, part: 'The Market'
101. Bihar, Vol. 83, p. 10
102. Bihar, Vol. 7, p. 271
103. Bihar, Vol. 77, p. 127
104. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 10, p. 30
105. Ibid
106. Ibid
107. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 3, p. 63
108. Man la yahduruhul-Faqih, Vol. 3, p. 372

Section 2: Allah Saves Noah and His Followers

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 23

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحاً إِلَي قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

23. "And indeed We sent Noah unto his folk, and he said: 'O' my people! Worship Allah. You have no other god save Him. Will you not keep from evil?' "

In the previous verses, Allah spoke of the creation of man and what supplies his material needs. Now in these verses, He attends to the supply of man's intellectual and doctrinal food.

In other words, the previous noble verses mentioned monotheism, knowledge of Allah, and the reasons of His majesty in the world of creation. This matter has been told from the mouths of the great prophets and by using the events that have unfolded in their history in this verse and the ones that follow.

It first begins with Noah, an arch-prophet and the bearer of the news of monotheism, the verse says:

"And indeed We sent Noah unto his folk, and he said: 'O' my people! Worship Allah. You have no other god save Him. Will you not keep from evil?' "

To serve other than Allah is impiety and recklessness.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verse 24

فَقَالَ الْمَلأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَآ إِلاَّ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَن يَتَفَضَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَوْ شَآءَ اللَّهُ لأَنزَلَ مَلآئِكَةً مَاسَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي ءَابَآئِنَا الاَوَّلِينَ

24. “But the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: ‘This is nothing but a mortal like you who intends to gain superiority over you. And if Allah had pleased (***to send any prophet***)***, He surely could have sent down angels. We have not heard of this*** (***invitation***) ***among our ancestors of old’.”***

The elite were the most intractable of those who opposed the prophets.

The prophets (as) had come to guide mankind but the unbelievers used to say that a heavenly messenger should not be a human being! Because of this the rich and conceited elite among Noah’s folk, used to say: This is only a mortal like you who seeks to dominate you.

The verse says:

“But the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: ‘This is nothing but a mortal like you who intends to gain superiority over you…”

Thus, they saw Noah’s humanity as a defect and accused him of self aggrandizement and that all he had said about Allah, about monotheism and religion, were merely plots to achieve this aim.

Then they added:

“…And if Allah had pleased (***to send any prophet***)***, He surely could have sent down angels…”***

And, to complete this unfounded argument, they said:

“…We have not heard of this (***invitation***) ***among our ancestors of old’.”***

Of course, when facing correct logic, one must not rely on national culture and the imitation of one’s ancestors to defend the existing situation, instead one must follow the Divine call of His prophet.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verses 25-26

إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ رَجُلٌ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوا بِهِ حَتَّي حِينٍ

قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ

25. "He is just a man in whom is a madness, so bear with him for a while."
26. "He (Noah) said: 'My Lord! help me against what they Belie'."

Obstinacy and conceit lead some individuals to attribute madness to their prophet, the wisest of people. The elite among the blasphemers imagine the call of the prophets to be a mental aberration and ask others to wait until he ceases asserting his claims.

(***"...so bear with him for a while."***)

These baseless words, however, did not affect the soul of this great prophet, and Noah continued his mission without the slightest sign of self aggrandizement in what was he doing.

When they saw that their accusations were not supported by reality they made another accusation, saying that he was insane, a charge that had been leveled upon all Divine prophets and veracious leaders in the course of history.

They said:

"He is just a man in whom is a madness, so bear with him for a while."

It is very interesting that they used the Arabic word /jinnatun/ (a kind of madness) in the accusation they leveled at this great arch-prophet, suppressing the fact that the life and speeches of this prophet were the best indicators of his knowledge and reasonableness.

In truth, they intended to say that, granted his behavior might be correct and sound, but madness could have many faces among which is that very appearance of reasonableness and knowledge.

The Qur'anic sentence /fa tarabbasu bihi hatta hin/

(***"...so bear with him for a while"***)

may refer to the possibility that they were anticipating Noah's death when they would get peace of mind; or it may mean that they were waiting until he was cured from the sickness of madness that they had attributed to him!

At any rate, they made three kinds of unfounded and paradoxical accusations, each of which they advanced as a reason to deny his prophecy:

1) The claim of prophecy by a human being is a lie! Such a phenomenon is unprecedented.

"...And if Allah had pleased, He surely could have sent down angels"

2) He is a man who seeks after self-aggrandizement and uses this claim to gain it.

3) He does not have sound reason and what he says is due to insanity.

Since the answer of these baseless accusations and objections is obvious, and is mentioned in other verses of the Holy Qur'an, no more is said by the Qur'an about it here.

It stands to reason that naturally a leader of human beings must himself be a human being, for he should existentially be cognizant of the needs, pains and problems of being human. Moreover, the prophets had always been human in their nature.

On the other hand, it is clearly understood from the lives of the prophets that brotherliness, humility, and the absence of any form of self aggrandizement have been of their most outstanding attributes, and their reason, intelligence and insight were not unknown to their foes for they acknowledged them in their own words.

Noah's enemies did not confine their molestation and annoyance to leveling unjust accusations against him. From other verses of the Qur'an it is understood that they put great pressure on him in other ways as well. Noah tried his best to guide and save them from the clutches of blasphemy and polytheism.

When he despaired in his efforts, he asked for Allah's help, as we read in the verse which says:

"He** (**Noah**) **said: 'My Lord! help me against what they belie'."

Of course, he asked Allah's help for the victory of faith over disbelief, not for the victory of himself as an individual over another. Therefore, he said: "Help me against what they belie" and he did not say help me against them.

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verse 27

فَاَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْهِ أَنِ اصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِاَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا فَإِذَا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ فَاسْلُكْ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلاَّ مَن سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلاَ تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُم مُّغْرَقُونَ

27. "Then We revealed unto him: 'Build the Ark before Our eyes and** (**according to**) **Our revelation. Then, when Our command comes and the oven gushes** (**water**)**, take into it a pair of every kind** (**of animal**) **and** (**also**) **your family, except those of them against whom the word has already gone forth. And plead not with Me on behalf of those who are unjust, for verily they shall be drowned."

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Noah (as) called people to monotheism both secretly and openly for 950 years, until Allah told him:

'...None of your People will believe except those who have believed already...'[1]

Then Noah said:

’... they will mislead Your servants and will beget none save lewd ungrateful (children)’[2]*.”*[3]

Then Allah issued the command for him to make the Ark and preparations were made to save Noah and his few companions and to destroy the obstinate polytheists. So He says:

“Then We revealed unto him: ‘Build the Ark before Our eyes and (according to) Our revelation...”

The Qur’anic phrase /bi ’a‘yunina/ (before Our eyes) refers to the fact that Noah’s effort and endeavor for this end was in the presence of Allah (s.w.t.) and He supported him, so Noah continued his task with a tranquil soul arid without being afraid of or concerned about anything.

The Arabic word /wahyina/ (Our revelation) shows that Noah learned the technique of making the Ark through the Divine revelation. Such a thing (as history shows) was unprecedented at that time. Consequently, Noah made the ship according to Allah’s direction, so it did not fall short of perfection for his aim.

The verse continues saying:

“...Then, when Our command comes and the oven gushes (water), take into it a pair of every kind (of animal) and (also) your family, except those of them against whom the word has already gone forth...”

(This last sentence refers to Noah’s wife and one of his children)

Then the Qur’an adds:

“...And plead not with Me on behalf of those who are unjust, for verily they shall be drowned.”

Of course, this warning was because Noah could have been moved by human sentiments or fatherly affection that might lead him (as) to intercede on behalf of them while they no longer deserved intercession.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verses 28-30

فَإِذَا اسْتَوَيْتَ أَنتَ وَمَن مَّعَكَ عَلَي الْفُلْكِ فَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي نَجَّانَا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

وَقُل رَبِّ أَنزِلْنِي مُنزَلاً مُّبَارَكاً وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ الْمُنزِلِينَ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ وَإِن كُنَّا لَمُبْتَلِينَ

28.“And when you, and those with you, are settled on the Ark, say: ‘all praise belongs to Allah Who has delivered us from the unjust people!’ ”
29. “And say: ‘My Lord! Cause me to land with a blessed landing, for You are the Best to cause to land’.”
30. “Verily in this there are signs; and indeed We put (men) to test.”

First, we must be grateful to Allah for all His previous blessings then we ask Him for a new favour. The historical subjects of The Holy Qur’an are guiding signs and a cause for our development, they are not for the purposes of entertainment or for simple story telling.

In this noble verse, addressing Noah, Allah said:

“And when you, and those with you, are settled on the Ark, say: ‘All praise belongs to Allah Who has delivered us from the unjust people!’ ”

Then in the second verse, Noah is told that after praising Allah for the first great blessing, that is being saved from the clutches of the oppressors, he should beseech Allah in this way:

“And say: ‘My Lord! Cause me to land with a blessed landing, for You are the Best to cause to land’.”

The Arabic word /manzil/ perhaps here is a noun of place, that is to say that after the storm ended Allah would land Noah’s ship on a land that was blessed with abundant favours, so that he could live on it comfortably.

It may also be an infinitive, that is to say that Allah would land Noah’s Ark with a good way, because after that the storm ended, many dangers would face the ship when it was about to land, such as the lack of a proper place to live, the shortage of food, and different kinds of diseases, so Noah asked Allah to land the ship with a blessed landing.

Finally, the last verse of this group of verses refers to the whole story in which Noah overcome the oppressors; and the severe punishment of these people is considered as a sign for the possessors of intellect.

The verse says:

“Verily in this there are signs; and indeed We put (men) to test.”

The above sentence may indicate that Allah frequently tested the people of Noah and when they could not pass the test, He caused them to perish.

It may also point out that Allah tests all mankind in every age, and the verses above are not only peculiar to the people of Noah’s age. Mankind is tested in various forms in all ages and, as a result of them,

those who are thorns on the way of human development are removed, so that humanity would continue its journey of perfection unhindered.

It is interesting that in the verses above, only the making the Ark and the embarkation of Noah and his companions are mentioned. Details of what ultimately happened to the wrongdoers is not mentioned in the Qur'an, but by the Divine promise which says:

"…verily they shall be drowned"

It becomes certain that such a fate befell them, for Allah's promise is always fulfilled.

It is also necessary to mention that more information about the story of Noah and his struggle with the unbelieving people of his folk, as well as the events of making Ark, gushing water, the occurrence of the storm, and when Noah's son was drowned, there are much explanation which can be found in the books about the history of the prophets.

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verses 31-32

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْناً ءَاخَرِينَ

فَأَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ رَسُولاً مِّنْهُمْ أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

31. "Then, after them, We produced another generation;"
32. "And We sent among them a messenger from among themselves (***saying***)***: 'Worship Allah. You have no other god besides Him. Will you not keep from evil?' "***

As His way of treatment, Allah has appointed a prophet for every nation.

The prophet must be from among the people themselves, so that they have a practiced and forbearing example among them. Thus, these verses discuss upon the nations that have come after Noah (as) and explain their gloomy fate. They also show that the logic of the unbelievers of later generations were similar to those of the former generations.

At first, it says:

"Then, after them, We produced another generation;"

The Arabic word /qarn/ is derived from the word /'iqtiran/, which means proximity, therefore the generation that lives in a particular single age is called a 'qarn'. Sometimes the time, characterized by a certain generation, in Arabic is called a 'qarn'.

The measurement of the length of a ‘qarn’ as 30 to 100 years is only a convention and is dependent upon the traditions of various nations.

Then the next holy verse implies that since man cannot be without a Divine leader, Allah sent a great prophet to them that he would teach them monotheism, the religion of Truth and justice, and would call people to them, as the verse says:

“And We sent among them a messenger from among themselves* (*saying*)*: ’Worship Allah. You have no other god besides Him. Will you not keep from evil?’ ”

This is what has formed the basis of the call of all Divine prophets. Indeed it has been the call of monotheism that has formed the main substructure of all individual and social reformations.

Then the prophet asks the question whether they would not shun polytheism and idol worship, when they are called to monotheism:

(***…Will you not keep from evil?***)

The prophet and the nation, to which he had been sent, have not been identified in the Qur’an, but with regards to their identities in other verses of the Qur’an, there are two possibilities offered by the commentators:

1) It was the people of Thamud who used to live in an area located in the north of Hijaz, whose prophet was Salih, a great Divine prophet that was appointed to guide those people. They disbelieved in his message and rebelled and were finally destroyed by a heavenly cry (or a deadly thunderbolt).

The evidence of this interpretation is the punishment of the Cry which is mentioned at the end of the holy verses under consideration, and it is also found in Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 67 which clearly is about the people of Salih.

2) It was the people of ‘Aad whose prophet was Hud. Their story is told in other verses of the Holy Qur’an immediately after the story of Noah (as). This itself is a flame of evidence whereby it is possible to interpret the holy verse mentioned above in this way.

However, considering that this nation’s punishment was a very fierce wind that continued for seven nights and eight days destroying them, as verses 6 and 7 of Sura Al-Haqqah have mentioned, it becomes clear that the first interpretation is more correct.

Anyway, we see what the reaction of this obstinate nation was to this great prophet’s call of monotheism.

1. Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 36
2. Sura Noah, No. 71, verse 27
3. Bihar, Vol. 11, p. 331

Section 3: Generations Raised After Noah’s People

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verse 33

وَقَالَ الْمَلاُ مِن قَوْمِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِلِقَآءِ الاَخِرَةِ وَأَتْرَفْنَاهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مَا هَذَآ إِلاَّ بَشَرٌ مّـِثْلُكُمْ يَأْكُلُ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا تَشْرَبُونَ

33.“The chiefs of his people, who disbelieved and denied the meeting of the Hereafter, and whom We had given affluence in the life of the world, (said): ‘This is nothing but a mortal like you, he eats of what you eat from and drinks of what you drink.’ ”

The call of the Divine prophets was based upon liberating people from the dominance of oppressors and aristocrats. Consequently, the aristocrats .opposed the prophets more than others did.

(***“And the chiefs of his people…*** (***said***)***…”***)

The Qur’an in this holy verse implies that the affluent and conceited folk upon whom Allah had bestowed abundant blessings negated the One God, Allah, and denied the meeting of the Resurrection. They said: This is only a mortal like you, he eats what you eat and drinks what you drink.

The verse says:

“The chief of his people, who disbelieved and denied the meeting of the Hereafter, and whom We had given affluence in the life of the world, (said): ‘This is nothing but a mortal like you, he eats of what you eat from and drinks of what you drink.’”

Yes, the Qur’an calls those affluent people /mala’/. This means that they were very attractive in their appearance but their hearts were darkened to the light of Truth.They started to struggle against the teachings of their prophet applying the same type of arguments that those who rejected Noah had done.

This they did because they saw the call of this great prophet as going against their low desires and a barrier to their unlawful interests, arrogance, and baseless social preeminence. It was because of the same affluence that they had been aloof from Allah and denied Resurrection. They disputed against the Truth with the same logic that the disbelievers of the people of Noah (as) did.

The very human nature of these Divine leaders, the normal ways in which they ate, drank and the simple ways in which they lived their lives were used as reasons to negate their prophetic missions.

The humanness of these great men, in fact, confirmed their missions for it made them more accessible and more sympathetic to the sufferings of the common people, something which the arrogant could not see, for as Imam Ali (as) says:

"Their jealousy made them say such words." [1]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 34-36

وَلَئِنْ أَطَعْتُم بَشَراً مِثْلَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ إِذاً لَخَاسِرُونَ

أَيَعِدُكُمْ أَنَّكُمْ إِذَا مِتُّمْ وَكُنتُمْ تُرَاباً وَعِظَاماً أَنَّكُم مُخْرَجُونَ

هَيْهَاتَ هَيْهَاتَ لِمَا تُوعَدُون

34. "And if you obey a mortal like yourselves, verily then you will be losers."
35. "Does he promise you that when you are dead and have become dust and bones, you will indeed be raised (from the dead)?"
36. "Far, very far is what you are promised!"

The unbelievers and polytheists believe that following the prophets bring loss to mankind. They would rather want that people submit to themselves and with the slogan of liberty drive people into slavery.

This is why they said:

"And if you obey a mortal like yourselves, verily then you will be losers."

These blind-hearted persons were probably not aware that they themselves expected the people to follow their evil ideas and united together to struggle against this prophet. They saw following someone guided by the Center of Revelation, whose heart was illuminated by the light of Divine knowledge as a defect and a flaw that stood against human freedom and liberty!

The next verse points to the fact that their real argument against religion was the denial of the Resurrection. They knew that if the Resurrection were accepted, it would prove ahindrance to the achievement of the goals of their appetites and of their social ambitions.

They said:

"Does he promise you that when you are dead and have become dust and bones, you will indeed be raised (from the dead)?"

The third verse shows that the unbelievers did not accept the promises of their prophet in this regard. They were opposed to the possibility of returning back to life after complete annihilation in the earth. In fact, they believed that its occurrence was impossible.

"Far, very far is what you are promised!"

The Qur'anic word /hayhat/ is used in the Qur'an twice which is in this very verse. It shows that the elite among the unbelievers imagined that the Resurrection was a very remote possibility indeed.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 37-38

إِنْ هِيَ إِلاَّ حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ

إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ رَجُلٌ افْتَرَي عَلَي اللَّهِ كَذِباً وَمَا نَحْنُ لَهُ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

37. "There is nothing but our life in this world: we die and we live, and we shall not be raised again"
38. "He is naught but a man who has forged a lie about Allah, and we will not believe him."

Some of unbelievers believed in Allah, but they did not accept the Resurrection and prophecy.

They rejected the saints and friends of Allah as well as the Divine promises with the claim of 'preserving the sanctity of the Lord.'

In this noble verse, the other reason they employed to deny the Resurrection was by saying:

"There is nothing but our life in this world…"

They implied that there was nothing left of them after death one appeared out of nothing and returned to nothingness. One generation always dies and another generation takes its place.

The verse continues saying:

"…we die and we live, and we shall not be raised again."

Finally, in the next verse, their argument became personal and they attacked their prophet's character, when they said:

"He is naught but a man who has forged a lie about Allah, and we will not believe him."

The unbelievers thought that no wise man would believe in that prophet for they denied his Divine mission nor did they believe in his promises about the Resurrection.

Sometimes a society can decline to such an extent that the real supporters of religion are introduced as liars and the conceited unbelievers are called as supporters of Allah's sanctuaries.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 39-41

قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ

قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ لَّيُصْبِحُنَّ نَادِمِينَ

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ بِالْحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ غُثَاءً فَبُعْداً لِّلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

39. " (Their prophet) said: 'My Lord! Help me against what they belie!'."
40. " (Allah) said: 'In a little while they will be remorseful'."
41. "Then the Blast overtook them with justice, and We made them into a scum. So away with the unjust people!"

Prophets Only Rely On Allah

(***"O my Lord..."***)

The word 'Rabb' is one of the best words to use in prayer and supplication. After the word Allah, the most frequent word applied in the Qur'an is 'Rabb'.

When the conceit and rebelliousness of the people of Thamud had exceeded its limit, they got more brazen in their unbelief and indecency attacking the character of the prophet himself and calling his prophetic arguments, miracles and revelations lies.

The Divine prophet invoked to Allah, as the verse says:

" (Their prophet) said: 'My Lord! Help me against what they belie!'"

He (as) invoked, indicating that they did and said whatever they could and they accused me in whatever they desired, but You, O' Lord, help me.

The next verse is an answer to him, it says:

" (Allah) said: 'In a little while they will be remorseful'."

They will become regretful when it would be of no benefit and there will be no way of return for them.

And this is what happened, as the next verse says:

"Then the Blast overtook them with justice…"

The deadly thunder descended with a terrible and horrible sound and destroyed everywhere. It piled up their corpses and it was so sudden and devastating that they did not have even a chance to escape from their houses and so they were buried in them, as the Holy Qur'an says:

"…and We made them into a scum…"

So away with the wrongdoing lot! These are the people of the Thamud who had defied their prophet Salih, and killed the female camel that, as a miracle of their prophet, had come out of the middle of a mountain.

The verse concludes:

"…So away with the unjust people!"

Points to Note

1- What Does 'Sayhah' mean?

The Arabic word /sayhah/ (here, the Cry) philologically means a very loud noise that comes out of the mouth of a human or animal. This noise is however not particular to them and is applied to every loud noise.

We read in the Holy Qur'an that some sinful nations were destroyed by it. A few of them are the nations of Thamud, Lot[2]and Shu'ayb.[3]

It is understood from other verses of the Qur'an that the punishment of the people of Thamud was occurred by a thunderbolt.

For example, it says:

"But if they turn away, men say: 'I have warned you of a thunderbolt like the thunderboltof 'Ad and Thamud."[4]

This verse shows that the meaning of 'sayhah' is the terrible sound of thunderbolt. Can the terrifying noise of thunderbolt kill a crowd of people?

The answer to this question is surely positive, for we know that if sound waves exceed a certain limit, they can break building glass, and even destroy some buildings and disable some organs of the human body.

When an airplane breaks the sound barrier some people fall unconscious or some women abort their

fetuses, and it breaks all of the glass in buildings of the locality.

It is natural that if the intensity of acoustic waves increases to certain levels, it can easily cause deadly disorders in the nervous system, brain vessels and in the heart, and it can kill people.

Of course, according to the Holy Qur'an, the end of this world would be with such a Cry, where it says:

"They await but a single Cry, which will overtake them while they are disputing". [5]

It is similar to Resurrection which begins with an awakening Blast.

The Qur'an says:

"There would be naught but a single cry, when behold! They shall all be brought before Us." [6]

2. The Islamic narrations say that it was only one person who killed the camel, however, the Holy Qur'an attributes the crime to the entire unbelieving nation who were Salih's opponents and it uses plural pronoun, where it says:

"So they hamstrung her…" [7]

This is because the Qur'an counts inward contentment with an ideological affair and maintaining a relationship with it as participating in it. In fact, the plot to kill the animal did not have an individual aspect, for even the person who had committed the offence did not only rely on his power, but he was encouraged by the power and support of the group.

Certainly, such a task is not individual but collective and communal.

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) once said:

"The Camel of Thamud was slaughtered by one person, but Allah punished all of the Thamud people, for they all were content with this offence." [8]

There are many narrations with the same meaning or like it from the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as) about this subject. They show the extraordinary importance that Islam gives to ideological commonality and support as well as acting in harmony with a program.

Here are a few of them:

The Prophet (S) said:

"Someone who watches and observes an activity but dislikes it, is like a person who is absent when that activity is being performed; and someone who was absent at the time an activity was being performed but was inwardly content with it, is like a person who was present at the time of that activity and had taken part in it." [9]

Imam Ali ibn Musa-ar-Rida (as) once said:

"Whenever someone is murdered in the east and another person in the west is satisfied with the murder of that individual, this person is an abettor of the murderer before Allah."[10]

Imam Ali (as) said:

"One who is satisfied with an activity of a group is like a person who has taken part in that activity, but someone who has taken a practical part in the activity has committed two sins, one is the sin of committing the activity and the other is the sin of being satisfied with it."[11]

Islam sees ideological and intellectual affinities as very profound and extensive to the extent that they are not limited by time and place. A close reading of this meaningful speech of Imam Ali (as) in Nahj-ul-Balaqah will be enough:

When Imam Ali (as) overcame the enemy in the War of Jamal, and his comrades were happy with the victory of Islam over ignorance and division, one of them said:

"I wish my brother had participated in this war, so he, too, would have seen what success and victory Allah had given you."

Imam Ali (as) replied:

"Tell me! Was your brother with us (in his heart)?"

The man said:

"Yes."

The Imam said:

"In that case, he was with us."

Then he (as) continued:

"Rather, in this army of ours, even those persons were also present who are still in the loins of men and wombs of women! Shortly, time will bring them out and faith will get strength through them."[12]

3. There is a relationship between the Qur'anic word /'itraf/ (life of the aristocracy) and the infidelity that denies the meeting with Allah.

Verily, it is true. Usually those who live this type of life enjoy a larger degree of freedom to pursue whatever kinds of sensual gratification and animal pleasure they wish. Accepting the Divine guardianship and the Resurrection would be a barrier to this kind of life, disturbing both the consciences of these aristocrats and making people brave enough to stand up against them.

They, therefore, remove the yoke of Allah's servitude from their necks and deny the Origin and the Resurrection. As we read in the verses above, they insist that worldly, physical life is the only life and there is nothing after that, calling a liar whoever claims the contrary.

They believe that this is the only moment they have, and as such they must pick a flower from every garden and enjoy themselves on every occasion in these few days of life! In this manner, they justify their offenses and wrong actions.

Moreover, to live such luxurious lives without usurping others' rights is usually impossible. Thus, they had to deny the Resurrection and the mission of the prophets to maintain their position and their lifestyle.

We see in our daily lives that the majority of those who live luxurious lives turn their backs, and look down their noses at every one.

These miserable blind-hearted people, who are at the mercy of their whims and caprices, go out of Allah's shadow of obedience and grace whenever they wear the yoke of bondage to lusts and low desires, and open themselves up to becoming the slaves of other slaves.

Such persons, who are usually rich and corrupt, have dark hearts, unclean souls, and degenerate thoughts. Their grand view of life may seem interesting to some people, but when one looks closely, it appears terrible and ugly, for they are agitated and disturbed by the absence of the peace caused by sin, the fear of death, and the decline of blessings.

In Majma'-ul-Bayan, volume 5, page 168, Tabarsi narrates an interesting view of one of the interpreters of the Qur'an following verse 49 where saying:

"The worldly possessors of favour are led astray and perish, for verily ignorance and negligence overcome them and they care about nothing but this world and its pleasures."

This fact is discerned in rich and prosperous countries where most of them are ridden with corruption. They not only do not care for the oppressed of the world but also they make new plans every day to exploit them and their resources.

Consequently their blessings are temporarily removed by wars and painful events that Allah causes to awaken them.

4. What is Qutha' (scum)?

In the verses above, we read that the people of Thamud were made into /qua'/ (scum) by the thunderbolt. The Arabic term /qua'/ originally means dried plants in the form of an untidy pile of muck that float on floodwaters. In addition, the scum produced in a boiling pot is also called /qua/.

Likening their corpses to /qua/ indicates their extreme weakness, frailty, defeat, and worthlessness,

because straws on the floodwater are lighter and more trivial than anything there is. They have no choice and destination, for after the passing and subsiding of a flood no trace of them remains.

5. It is noteworthy that the last sentence of the verses above no longer particularize the issue to the people of Thamud, it now becomes generalized and Allah says:

"…So away with the unjust people!"

This is, in fact, the conclusion of all these verses, which means that what has been stated up to this point, the denial and negation of Divine signs and the denial of the Resurrection and their painful consequences, are not particular to a certain people, rather, all oppressors in the course of history share the same characteristics and the same fate.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 42-43

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُوناً ءَاخَرِينَ

مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ

42."Then after them We brought forth other generations."
43. "No nation may outstrip its term, nor do they postpone (it)."

Raising another generation when the previous one passes away is Allah's way.

(***"Then … We brought forth…"***)

Historical change is under the sovereignty of Allah. Every society and nation has a wisely specified term and a defined end.

Do not become self-confidant when the Divine punishment is delayed, for Divine programs are not cancelled with the clamor of people, and historical changes are governed by the Divine discipline. History has some stable and well-established traditions.

Thus, in this noble verse, after the end of the story of the people of Thamud, the Holy Qur'an indicates that other nations were brought forth after them and before Moses (as).

The Qur'an says:

"Then after them We brought forth other generations."

It is Allah's grand rule and way of treatment that He does not terminate His constant outpouring of grace

and emanation, and if a group of people becomes a barrier to human perfection, He will cause them to perish and will continue to lead this caravan on its way.

In the next verse Allah implies that each of these various nations and tribes had a fixed time, nations could neither hasten nor forestall their terms and whenever the decisive command for their extinction is issued, they will perish forthwith, neither sooner nor later.

The Arabic word /'ajal/ means the period and lifetime of an object, or it can sometimes mean an end or a termination. For example, we say that the due date ('ajal) of a particular debt is on such and such a day.

As we also said before, there are two kinds of /'ajal/ (termination):

A) Unavoidable: This is the fixed date of a person, a thing, or a people's extinction, and it cannot be changed.

B) Conditional or pending: This can be increased or decreased as circumstances change.

This verse obviously refers to 'the unavoidable kind of /'ajal/'.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 44

ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرَا كُلَّ مَا جَآءَ أُمَّةً رَّسُولُهَا كَذَّبُوهُ فَأَتْبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُم بَعْضاً وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ فَبُعْداً لِقَوْمٍ لاَّيُؤْمِنُونَ

44. "Then We sent Our messengers one after another. Whenever there came unto a people their messenger, they belied him, so We caused some of them to follow others (in disaster) and We made them stories. So away with a people that do not believe!"

Sending prophets to various nations is one of the Ways of Allah. (Every society needs a leader. Thought and science alone do not suffice man, for there are many affairs that can only be realized through revelation). Allah decides historical transitions and the destruction of obstinate nations is a manifestation of His imprecation and curse.

(***"...and We made them stories..."***)

Therefore, this noble verse indicates the fact that the call of the prophets has never been terminated during the course of history.

The verse says:

"Then We sent Our messengers one after another..."

The Arabic word /tatra/ is derived from the word /watr/, meaning successively or one after another. And /tawatur-i-'axbar/ means bits of news that arrive one after the other by means of which one is convinced

with certainly.

This word originally is derived from the word /watr/ which means ‘bowstring’, for it is attached to the ends of the bow at its sack and brings them closer together.

(From the point of view of the structure of the word, /tatra/ was originally/ watra/ but, in Arabic, its ‘w’ was changed to a ‘t’).

These heavenly teachers successively came and left but obstinate nations were still unbelieving in such a way that, as the Qur’an says:

“…Whenever there came unto a people their messenger, they belied him…”

When this denial, scandalizing and infidelity exceeded their limits and the final argument had been already presented,

“…so We caused some of them to follow others (in disaster)…”

They were so completely exterminated that only their stories remained among people.

As He continues saying:

“…and We made them stories…”

Sometimes a generation becomes extinct, but some of its people survive, existing as sparse populations here and there. Sometimes, however, a generation is wiped out in such a way that only its name remains in the pages of history and in the conversations of people. Such has always been the case among those rebellious nations, the latter group.

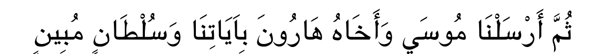
At the end of the verse, like in the previous verses, the Qur’an adds:

“…So away with a people that do not believe!”

These painful and terrible fates were the results of their unbelief, and therefore they were not particular to just those nations mentioned in this verse. Every oppressing, obstinate, and atheistic group will taste such a fate and it will be so utterly destroyed that only its name will remain in history and among humanity.

They will be away from the grace of Allah not only in this world but also in the Hereafter, because the objective meaning of the verse is absolute and encompasses all.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verses 45-46



إِلَي فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْماً عَالِينَ

45. "Then We sent Moses and his brother Aaron with Our signs and a manifest authority, "
46. "Unto Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they behaved insolently and they were an arrogant people."

The Arabic word /sultan/ is a synonym for an 'evidence', for someone can often dominate people's hearts with logic, reasoning, and rational and practical argument.

Up till now the subject was the nations that arose and disappeared before the time of Moses (as), Allah's arch-prophet, but here the Qur'an briefly refers to the uprising of Moses and Aaron themselves against the Pharaonic system and the destiny of this conceited nation.

The Qur'an says:

"Then We sent Moses and his brother Aaron with Our signs and a manifest authority, "

The objective of the Qur'anic word /'ayat/ (Signs) is the Torah and the miracles (the nine Signs) that Allah had bestowed upon Moses, the son of 'Imran.

And the objective of the Arabic phrase /sultanin mubin/ (manifest authority) is the strong logical argument Moses presented and the powerful reasons he gave against the claims of pharaonism.

In the next verse, the Qur'an implies that Allah sent Moses and his brother Aaron to Pharaoh and his aristocrat and proud elites supported by these signs (miracles) and manifest authority.

The verse says:

"Unto Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they behaved insolently..."

This verse indicates the fact that the root of all corruption was found with them and no nation could be reformed unless its elites and authorities change and reform.

Despite the compelling arguments and impressive miracles of Moses, Pharaoh and his companions became conceited and did not accept Allah's signs and the manifest authority and they continued to oppress the people.

The verse concludes saying:

"...and they were an arrogant people."

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 47-48

فَقَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ لِبَشَرَيْنِ مِثْلِنَا وَقَوْمُهُمَا لَنَا عَابِدُونَ

فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَكَانُوا مِنَ الْمُهْلَكِينَ

47. "And they said: 'Shall we believe in two humans like ourselves while their people are our slaves?'"
48. "So they belied both of them and became of those who were destroyed."

Moses and Aaron (as) were from the generation of the Children of Israel, while the people of Pharaoh saw themselves as superior to the Children of Israel based upon the latter's enslavement.

That is why the Qur'an implies that one of the clear signs of their seeking superiority was that they said they should not believe in too human beings who were like themselves, [13] and whose tribe, the children of Israel, were their slaves. So, they believed that not only they should not accept them, but also that tribe had to be their servants for ever.

The verse says:

"And they said: 'Shall we believe in two humans like ourselves while their people are our slaves?'"

They accused the prophets of self-aggrandizement when they themselves were the worst of supremacists, a fact that is clearly seen in their words. In their arrogance they dismissed the Truth and accused Moses (as) and Aaron (as) of being two liars and, because of this, they were destroyed and lost their empire and their rule.

The holy verse says:

"So they belied both of them and became of those who were destroyed."

Thus, finally, the most powerful obstacle to the call of Moses and the greatest enemy of the Children of Israel was destroyed and the period of Divine education and training for the Children of Israel began.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 49

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَي الْكِتَابَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

49. "And certainly We gave Moses the Book, that they may be rightly guided."

The prophets support their own claims with their powerful reasoning and their miracles, whereas the unbelievers and illegitimate rulers assert theirs through subjugation and enslavement of people.

Allah (s.w.t.) sent the Turah to Moses (as) and called the Children of Israel to implement its Divine programs, as the noble verse says:

“And certainly We gave Moses the Book, that they may be rightly guided.”

One should note that the previous holy verses usually mentioned both Moses and his brother in the dual tense during the phase of struggle with pharaonism, but in this verse we see that only Moses is named with regard to the revelation of the heavenly Book.

This is because he is an arch-prophet and is the recipient of a new revelation and a new religion. Moreover, at the time when the Turah was sent down to Moses (as) he was alone on Mount Sinai and his brother, Aaron, remained to represent him among the Children of Israel.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verse 50

وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ ءَايَةً وَءَاوَيْنَاهُمَآ إِلَي رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَمَعِينٍ

50. “And We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign, and We sheltered them upon a height quiet, secure and watered by a stream.”

The station of prophethood is the highest position among mankind and it is for this reason the name of Jesus precedes that of his mother,

(***“…the son of Mary and his mother a sign…”***)

In the explanation of the biography of Divine prophets, here at last the Qur’an shortly refers to Jesus (as) and his mother, Mary.

It says:

“And We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign…”

The phrase, ‘the son of Mary’, instead of saying ‘Jesus’, draws our attention to the fact that he was conceived without the participation of a father which made his birth one of the great signs of Allah’s power.

Since this exceptional birth is related to both Jesus and his mother, both of them are counted as one Sign, for his mother herself had an exceptional birth and was also exceptionally pure. They were, in fact, one truth with two different aspects.

The verse then mentions some of the blessings and favours bestowed upon Jesus and his mother.

It says:

“…and We sheltered them upon a height quiet, secure and watered by a stream.”

The Arabic word /rabwah/ is derived from the word /riba/, meaning excess and increase. Here it means a high land. The Qur'anic word /ma'in/ derived from the word /ma'n/ means the flow of water, thus /ma' in ma'in/ means running water. Some have considered it to be derived from the word /'ayn/, meaning water that is not hidden and can be discerned by eye.

This sentence conveys to us the safe, comfortable and peaceful place that Allah gave this mother and child so that they would be safe from the plots and machinations of their enemies and could fulfil their duties peacefully.

The opinions of interpreters are divided on the location of this site. Some believe that Nazareth (or Nasareh)[14] was the hometown of Jesus (as).

From the time of his birth, some of the enemies, that knew about his birth and his future role, plotted to murder him, so Allah (s.w.t.) saved him (as) and his mother by taking them away from Nazareth and sending them to this secure place, full of blessings.

Some say that it refers to Egypt, for Jesus and his mother had spent part of their lifetimes there.

Another viewpoint is that the site was in a desert in Palestine and Allah had made it peaceful and safe for the mother and the child by causing water to flow and provided them food from a dried-up date palm.

However, this verse shows that Allah constantly supports His messengers and those who support them. When we deserve the protection of Allah, it would not matter whether or not all of our enemies combine against us, they would not have any power to harm us if He does not will it.

The other point to be noted is that being isolated and lacking in physical support, or having only a few defenders, are no indicators of defeat.

1. Bihar, Vol. 32, p. 97
2. Sura Al-Hajj, No. 15, verse 73
3. Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 94
4. Sura Fusslat, No. 41, verse 13
5. Sura Ya-sin, No. 36, verse 49
6. Ibid
7. Sura Hud, verse 65
8. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, speech 1-2
9. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 11, p.409
10. Ibid. p. 410
11. Ibid p. 411
12. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, speech 13
13. Man is called /basher/ because the face and the skin of his body is bare, contrast to the animals whose bodies are usually covered by a natural clothing. In fact, since they lack the ability of providing clothes Allah has naturally provided them with it, while for man, He relied it on his intelligence and talent.
14. It is a historic city of Lower Galilee, in northern Palestine. It is the largest Arab city in the country. In the New Testament Nazareth is associated with Jesus as his bodyhood

Section 4: The Religion (Islam) Is the Religion for All

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verse 51

يَآ أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحاً إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

51. "O messengers! Eat of the good things and act righteously. Verily I know best what you do."

We should not forget two important principles, when we want to eat something:

1. Lawfulness

2. Purity and wholesomeness

All divinely revealed religions give great importance to the kinds of food we eat for they bring Divine succor in doing good deeds.

It is for this very reason that, addressing all the messengers, Allah says:

"O messengers! Eat of the good things and act righteously. Verily I know best what you do."

The difference between prophets and other human beings is not that they do not have human needs such as the need for food rather they see special modes of nutrition as means towards perfection, therefore they eat pure and wholesome food.

The average person eats as an aim in itself, pursuing the satisfaction of his animal desires whether it is good or bad, he is not even concerned about the physical benefits of his diet not to mention the spiritual effects the foods might have upon him.

Regarding that the kind and quality of food is certainly effective on man's spiritualities, and different sorts of food consequence different moral manners, the relation between these two sentences are made clear when it says:

"…Eat of the good things"

and

"Act righteously…"

Some Islamic traditions say that eating unlawful food hinders our prayers and supplications to be accepted.

There is a famous tradition stated by the Prophet (S) which is the evidence of this claim:

A man once told the Prophet (S) that he would like his prayers to be answered.

The Prophet replied:

"Make your food wholesome and refrain from eating unlawful food!"[1]

Commenting on this verse, Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The meaning of /tayyib/ is lawfulness."[2]

In this context it is also necessary to note that the sentence:

"…verily I know best what you do, "

is itself an independent reason for doing good deeds, because when man knows that someone is always watching his deeds and nothing remains hidden from Him and Who carefully reckons his deeds, he will be careful to act correctly and reform his behaviour.

The phrases in the verse above would also be important in arousing in us the sense of thanksgiving for the pure blessings that Allah has given us. This would, in turn, exert a profound effect upon our conduct.

In summary, this verse identifies three ways to encourage the tendency to do good deeds:

A) The influence of pure and wholesome food on the purity of the heart.

B) Arousing the sense of thanksgiving in man.

C) Drawing attention to the fact that Allah watches and observes all our deeds.

As said before, the Qur'anic word /tayyib/ means anything that is clean and pure. It is the opposite of the word 'khabith', which means foul and dirty. In the book 'Mufradat', the author Raqib says:

"The word 'tayyib' originally meant any affair that is pleasant, whether man thinks that he experiences this pleasure through his soul or physical senses or not, in reality, it is experienced only in his soul. In religion, however, it means anything that is clean and lawful."

Many verses in the Holy Qur'an talk about doing good and enjoying what is pure.

Here, not only the prophets but all the believers are also ordered to eat good and lawful food:

"O you who believe! Eat of the good things We have provided you with…"[3]

Only good words and deeds are near to Allah.

"...Unto Him do good words ascend, and the pious deed does He exalt..."[4]

Enjoying good things is one of the great blessings bestowed upon man by Allah and it can also be seen as one of the signs of man's superiority over all other creatures.

Allah in the Qur'an says:

"And, indeed, We have honored the children of Adam, and We carried them on the land and the sea; and We provided them with sustenance of the good things; and We preferred them greatly over many of those We created."[5]

The Prophet (S) reiterates this in a short, meaningful tradition when he says:

"O people! Allah is clean (and pure) and accepts nothing save good (and pure) deeds."[6]

Some Traditions On Lawfulness and Unlawfulness

1. An Islamic tradition says:

"Allah does not accept the worship of someone who has eaten a single morsel of something unlawful."[7]

2. The Prophet (S) said:

"Seeking the lawful (things) is the duty of every Muslim man and woman."[8]

3. The Prophet (S) said:

"Worship has 70 parts and the most superior of them is seeking the lawful (things)."[9]

4. The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever travels for obtaining lawful sustenance is like a warrior in the Path of Allah."[10]

5. Salman Farsi was asked:

"Which deed is the best?"

He replied:

"To have faith in Allah and (to eat) lawful bread (i.e., to earn an honest living)."[11]

6. The Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever earns his bread by his own hands, Allah will look at him with mercy and will never chastise

him."[12]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever eats that which is lawful, an angel will overshadow him and will continue to ask Allah's pardon for him until he finishes eating."[13]

8. The Prophet (S) said:

"Seeking the lawful is struggle (jihad) in the cause of Allah."

9. The Prophet (S) said:

"Seeking the lawful (sustenance) is obligatory next to the obligatory (prayer)."[14]

10. The Prophet (S) said:

"It is the duty of every Muslim to try to obtain lawful (sustenance)."[15]

11. The Prophet (S) said:

"The best of deeds is to earn an income legally and honestly."[16]

Some Traditions On Unlawful Income and Business

12. The Prophet (S) said:

"When Allah makes something unlawful, its money becomes also unlawful."[17]

13. The sixth Imam (as) said:

"The result of unlawful income will become manifest in one's descendants."[18]

14. The Prophet (S) said:

"When an unlawful morsel enters a servant's body, all the angels in the heavens and the earth will curse him."[19]

15. The Prophet (S) said:

"Worshipping (Allah) with eating that which is unlawful is like a building on sand or some say like a building on water."[20]

16. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"The truth is that if a man obtains some property unlawfully, his Hajj pilgrimage, If 'Umrah, and his

observance of the ties of kinship will not be accepted, and even his chastity will be ruined in it."[21]

17. The Prophet (S) said:

"Allah has made Paradise forbidden for a body which has been fed inward unlawfully."[22]

18. The Prophet (S) said:

"Abstaining from having one unlawful morsel (of food) is more liked by Allah (s.w.t.) than the performance of two thousand rak'ats of a recommended prayers."[23]

19. Imam Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

"A generous one is he who avoids from the unlawful things and keeps himself pure from defects."[24]

20. The Sixth Imam (as) said:

"Imam Ali (as) has said: 'Whoever devours a believer's property unlawfully is not our friend'."[25]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 52

وإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ

52. "And verily this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord, so fear Me."

Both from the religious world-view and Divine perspectives, all nations, in fact, comprise one nation, The principles behind the call of all the Divine prophets reflect this fact, for the physical, spiritual, and innate needs of man are united in a common system of interrelationships.

This noble verse indicates that all the Divine prophets and their followers have been called to monotheism and piety.

The verse says:

"And verily this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah..."

They invite everyone to the unity and commonality of human society and invalidate all kinds of discrimination and separation. Since Allah is One, all of mankind are one nation.

The verse says:

"...and I am your Lord, so fear Me."

All nations must therefore follow one program, because their prophets invite people to one religion

whose principles have been the same all over the world.

These principles include: monotheism, the knowledge of Truth, acknowledging the Resurrection and the perfectibility of the life of man, using good things, performing good and pure deeds, and supporting justice and the principles of humanity.

Some interpreters believe that the Qur'anic word '***ummat***' here means 'religion', not people or nation, and the Qur'anic sentence /***'ana rabukum***/:

(***"…I am your Lord…"***),

which is in plural form, is an evidence to it and indicates that the objective meaning of 'Ummat' here is this very community of people.

As a result, in all cases where the word 'ummat' is used in the Holy Qur'an, it means nation and group, except in some special contexts where it means religion in a figurative sense such as the verse:

"…Verily we found our fathers on a religion (***ummat***)***, and we are certainly followers of their footsteps."***[26]

It is worthy to note that this subject is presented with a slight difference in verse 92 of Sura Al-'Anbiya:

"Verily, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord, so worship Me."

Before this verse, the story of many prophets had been presented and, in fact, the Arabic word /ha�ihi/ refers to the communities of the previous prophets, all of whom were one Ummah from the view of the command of Allah, and all were persuading one goal.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 53

فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُم بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُراً كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

53. "But people have cut off their affair (***of unity***) ***between them, into sects: each party rejoicing in that which is with them."***

Causing division is a great disaster which has a long history, therefore, following the invitation to unity and harmony in the former verse, mankind is now given a warning about conflict and disintegration with the phrase saying:

"But people have cut off their affair (***of unity***) ***between them, into sects…"***

It is wonderful that 'every one of these parties rejoices in that which is with itself and discriminates against the other.

The verse continues saying:

"...each party rejoicing in that which is with them."

The Arabic word /zubur/ is the plural form of the word /zubrah/, meaning a part of the hair on the back of an animal that can be gathered together and separated from the rest. This word has then been applied to everything that can be separated from something else.

Thus, the sentence:

"But people have cut off their affair..."

refers to the division of nations into various groups.

Some say that the word 'zubur' is probably a plural form of the word /zabur/, meaning book. Thus the verse can mean that each of them followed a heavenly book and denied the heavenly books of others while they had also originated from the same Divine Source.

However, the sentence:

'...each party rejoicing in that which is with them'

strengthens the first interpretation, for it speaks of various parties and their biases in favour of their own claims.

At any rate, the above verse expresses an important social and psychic fact that the ignorant bias of groups that have chosen certain religious schools of thought results in them closing off their minds to any other expression of the Divine truth and blocking off the light of knowledge.

This state which arises from egotism and narcissism is the greatest enemy to arriving at the impartial ultimate truth and reaching to the unity of peoples.

Contentment and complacency in one's own tradition and the sense of alienation and hostility to other than that is often expressed when we hear something from a religion other than ours and we shut it out, dismiss it and run away, lest a truth apparently other than what we are used to, be disclosed to us.

As the Holy Qur'an says about the polytheists of Noah's age:

"And verily whenever I call unto them that you may pardon them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, cover themselves with their garments, and persist (in their refusal) and magnify themselves with pride."[27]

When this state of prejudice persists, man becomes closed to the path of truth and instead he becomes obstinate and headstrong in his own view.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 54

فَذَرْهُمْ فِي غَمْرَتِهِمْ حَتَّي حِينٍ

54. "But leave them in their overwhelming ignorance for a time."

The worst kind of misleading is when Allah leaves man to his own devices:

(***"But leave them..."***).

Disagreement and division lead to the abyss of perdition and bring down the anger of Allah and His Prophet (S).

But people have cut off their affair.

"But leave them in their overwhelming ignorance..."

The above verse implies that when such is the case, one should leave them be in their ignorance, negligence, and confusion until the time of their death approaches when they will see the truth or, on the Day of Judgment when they will face the Divine punishment, because such people have no fate other than this.

The Qur'anic word /hin/ may refer to the time of their death, or the time of their punishment, or both.

The Arabic word /qamrah/ is derived from the word /qamara/ which means to destroy the effect of something. Then the water that rushes ahead on its way like a flood has been called /qamar/ or /qamir/.

The meaning of this word has afterward been extended to the sense of ignorance and the troubles that overwhelm man. Thus in the verse, the word means ignorance, negligence, confusion and misguidance.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 55-56

أَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُم بِهِ مِن مَّالٍ وَبَنِينَ

نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ بَل لاَّ يَشْعُرُونَ

55. "Do they think that what We aid them with wealth and children, "
56. "We are hasting unto them of good things? Nay, they do not perceive."

Evaluating oneself and others only on the basis of wealth and offspring indicates a lack of common

sense.

(*“...Nay, they do not perceive.”*)

The previous verses talked about the danger of being doctrinally and ideologically obstinate and bigoted.

Those obstinate groups and parties who have these tendencies are obsessively attached to their ideas, get a great deal of pleasure from the thought of their ascription to their particular belief system and close their minds to any attempt at investigation and inquiry into other religions.

These latter two verses mention a part of other aspects of their self-conceit where the Qur’an says:

“Do they think that what We aid them with wealth and children, ”

“We are hasting unto them of good things?...”

Do they think that having a great deal of property and offspring are proofs of the rightfulness of their belief and a sign of their spiritual greatness and closeness to Allah?

No, it is not like that, as the verse announces:

“...Nay, they do not perceive.”

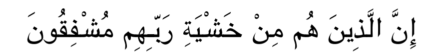
They are not aware that their very wealth and children are in fact a kind of punishment and chastisement or a means of trial and the beginning of the retribution for them. They are ignorant to the possibility that Allah might be giving them all kinds of blessings and favours in abundance so that the chastisement to come will be more painful for them.

It is a fact that if the doors of grace are closed to man, he will be more able to suffer troubles and deprivations, but this is not the case when he is used to a life of comfort and luxury for then the smallest deprivation can be very excruciating for him.

Moreover, this abundance of blessings usually thickens the veils of ignorance and conceit before the eyes of the evil and arrogant persons to the extent that they cannot return to the Path of Truth.

The Arabic word /numiddu/ is derived from the word /imdad/ and /madd/ which means to make the deficiency of something perfect, or to prevent something from ending.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verses 57-59



وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِرَبِّهِمْ لاَ يُشْرِكُونَ

57. "Verily those, who from fear of their Lord are cautious, "
58. "And those who believe in the Signs of their Lord, "
59. "And those who do not associate (***aught***) ***with their Lord, "***

Fear based on cognizant with a view to Allah's grandeur is a means towards development.

After negating the conjectures of those who are mostly self-conceited and ignorant, the Qur'an turns to the state of the believers and those who compete in doing good and then it describes their main characteristics.

At first, it says:

"Verily those, who from fear of their Lord are cautious, "

It is notable that the Qur'anic word /xašyat/ does not mean just any kind of fear, but the kind of fear that is associated with kindness and respect.

In view of the fact that 'khashyat' is related to the heart whereas 'ishfaq' is related to action, the reason why this type of cause and effect is mentioned in the verse will be made clear.

The verse in fact implies that the believers are those in whose hearts the fear based upon Allah's grandeur is found, and its effects become manifested in ftieir deeds and in their observance of the Divine commands.

In other words, the area where 'khashiyat' is perfected is the realm of 'ishfaq' wherekhashiyat influences behavior and disposes one to fulfil one's religious duties and refrain from sin.

The next verse says:

"And those who believe in the Signs of their Lord, "

This is to say, to have faith in the verses of Allah which is to believe in the Holy Qur'an. All of the Qur'an is the word of Allah from the 'ba' of the /bismillah/ of the first Sura to the 'seen' of 'an Nas', the last Sura totally have been sent to the Messenger of Allah (S), and all of its commandments must be obeyed.

The third verse indicates that the true believers affirm the sublimity and transcendence of Allah above any kind of similarity or association.

It says:

"And those who do not associate (***aught***) ***with their Lord, "***

This means that they are pure monotheists. In fact, the negation of polytheism is a result and an effect of believing in the signs of Allah. In other words, having faith in the signs of Allah refers to the Divine positive characteristics and the negation of polytheism refers to His negative characteristics. Polytheism in this verse refers to any kind of polytheism whether hidden or open.

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verse 60

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَآ ءَاتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَي رَبِّـهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ

60. "And those who give what they give (***in charity***) ***while their hearts are full of fear that they must*** (***finally***) ***return unto their Lord, "***

The Arabic word /wajilah/ means worry and anxiety. The believer is afraid of Allah because he will have to stand before Him on the Day of Resurrection.

(***"…with hearts afraid…"***)

This verse mentions the stage of belief in the Resurrection and its effect upon the behaviour and the special attention of the true believers to Resurrection in practice when it occupies a central place in their thoughts.

The verse indicates that those who try their best to obey Allah in giving people their due and are aware that they will soon return to their Lord, feel guilt and fear that they might not have adequately performed their obligations.

The verse says:

"And those who give what they give (***in charity***) ***while their hearts are full of fear that they must*** (***finally***) ***return unto their Lord, "***

They are not like those who lack foresight, have low ambition, and think that they are the favorites and are among the near stationed of Allah and fall in a surprising state of personality because of doing some small good deed, and think themselves better than others.

The true believers, on the contrary, when they do even the best of good deeds that might equal the worship of Jinn and man together, they say, as Imam Ali (as) said:

"Alas! Long is the journey of the Hereafter and small the supplies."

These verses indicate that man's spiritual perfection is realized in five stages:

1. The knowledge and gnosis which are the causes of fear:

(*"...who from fear of their Lord are cautious, "*)28

2. Enduring and profound belief in that which Allah has revealed:

(*"...who believe in..."*) 29

3. Avoidance of all kinds of polytheism, both the hidden and the apparent ones:

(*"...who do not associate* (*aught*) *with their Lord..."*)30

4. Charitableness in what Allah (s.w.t.) has bestowed upon a human being

(*"...give what they give* (*in charity*)*..."*) 31

5. Lack of conceit and, in its stead, concern that whatever good one had done one might not have been adequately sincere, or that it might have been rejected by his Lord or that one's duty might have been something else rendering him unable to answer Allah on the Day of Judgment

(*"...while their hearts are full of fear..."*)

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 61

أُوْلَئِكَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ

61. "These** (**are they who**) **hasten in good things and they are the foremost to** (**attain**) **them."

Fear of Allah and the Hereafter makes us hasten to do good deeds.

In the commentary of verse 56, it was said that some people think that having wealth and offspring are the cause of happiness and would make them hasten in doing good deeds. However, this verse implies that haste in doing good comes from knowledge, faith, sincerity, and charity accompanied by apprehension, and not what they imagine.

Contrary to what those who are ignorant and conceited think, real happiness and prosperity are not things possessed by the wealthy and affluent. Goodness, prosperity and Divine favour belong to that group of believers who are qualified with the aforementioned specialties and are outstanding in their morals and beliefs and thus are pioneers in doing good deeds.

The verse says:

“These (are they who) hasten in good things and they are the foremost to (attain) them.”

These couple of verses have an obvious and interesting logical progression that describe the attributes of this special group of believers: First, it starts with the fear of Allah born out of respect for Him.

This is the motivating factor that makes them submit to Him and, negate all forms of polytheism. It ends with having faith in the Day of Resurrection and Allah’s Court of Justice, which causes us to do good deeds and to take responsibility for the quality of those deeds.

The Qur’anic word /yusari’una/ means outstripping others in speed. This interesting word expresses the state of believers who race in competing for a great and precious objective and indicates the relentlessness of the competitors in acts of goodness and righteous deeds.

Surah al-Mu’minun – Verse 62

وَلاَ نُكَلِّفُ نَفْساً إِلاَّ وُسْعَهَا وَلَدَيْنَا كِتَابٌ يَنطِقُ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لاَ يُظْلَمُونَ

62. “And We do not task a soul but to the extent of its ability, and with Us is Record which clearly speaks the truth, and they will not be dealt with unjustly.”

In Islamic jurisprudence there is a rule based on this verse called: ‘the negation of distress and constriction’, which governs all Islamic rulings and holds priority over them. It means that when an obligation causes intolerable hardship, that obligation becomes nullified.

The duties are not the same for all individuals. Everyone’s obligations are related to his or her physical, intellectual, and resource capabilities. Allah does not expect the obligations of the poor to be the same as that of the rich.

The verse says:

“And We do not task a soul but to the extent of its ability, …”

The special attributes of the believers mentioned in the previous verses, that are the sources of all their good deeds, bring this question forth that not anyone can acquire such attributes nor all individuals have the ability of doing them.

The verse implies that Allah never obliges a person to do more than his power and strength but He expects everyone to do as much as his intelligence and capability can accomplish.

Divine duties and prescripts are in accordance with human strength and capability and whenever a duty exceeds one’s power, one becomes exempt from that duty and as the scholars of methodology say, this method governs all Islamic ordinances and is prior to them.

It might be asked how will the deeds, big or small, of all human beings be reckoned?

The verse says:

"...and with Us is a Record which clearly speaks the truth, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

This refers to the Record in which all of man's deeds are recorded and stands before Allah. It seems that this Record can speak and tell the truth in such a way that it is not possible to deny.

Another probability is that this Record is the Protected Tablet (al Lawh ul Mahfuz); moreover, the Qur'anic phrase /ladayna/ ('with Us') confirms the latter interpretation.

The verse, however, indicates the fact that every single deed of ours will be accurately recorded and none of them will be forgotten. Belief in this fact encourages the righteous to do good deeds and dissuades them from doing wrong.

The Qur'anic sentence 'which speaks the truth' shows that the Record of man's deeds is so plain and convincing that it does not need to be explained. As we have said before, it is as if the Record itself would speak and reiterate truths without the necessity of reading it.

The Qur'anic sentence:

'...they will not be dealt with unjustly.'

refers to the fact that there will be no injustice when people are punished or rewarded for their deeds which are recorded accurately.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 63

بَلْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ مِنْ هَذَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْمَالٌ مِن دُونِ ذَلِكَ هُمْ لَهَا عَامِلُونَ

63. "But their hearts are in overwhelming ignorance of this (Record), and they have, besides that, other deeds which they are doing;"

The previous verses spoke about the righteous, but this verse concerns the unbelievers, whose actions differ from those of the righteous, and the Arabic word /bal/ (but) at the beginning is for the transition of the matter.

The Arabic word /qamrah/ (here translated as 'in ignorance')means the water or the whirlpool mat engulfs man. Thus we get the impression that they are immersed in ignorance that penetrates their very souls.

Since the statement of truth only influences those who are some how awake and aware, the verse immediately adds implying that the hearts of this group of obstinate infidels have sank so deeply in ignorance that they are heedless of the Record of the deeds, on the Day of Reckoning and Retribution, and of whatever the Qur'an mentions about the Divine promise.

The verse says:

"But their hearts are in overwhelming ignorance of this (Record)…"

To be overwhelmed by ignorance and unawareness does not let them see these truths clearly which would have awoken their consciences and, perhaps, make them return to Allah.

Interpreters have various opinions about the meaning of the rest of the verse, which says:

"…and they have, besides that, other deeds which they are doing;"

Some say that it refers to the wrong deeds they do because of ignorance. (Thus the word /alika/ here, translated as 'that', refers to their ignorance.) The Arabic word /'a'mal/ (deeds) refers to the sins that they commit because of this very ignorance.

Other commentators say that the verse means that not only do they not believe in the true doctrine but that they are also from the point of action very corrupt. Yet others say that the verse means that the program and conduct of the unbelievers are completely different from those of the believers, so they follow two different paths.

In the final analysis, these apparently different interpretations are not inconsistent and can be reconciled with each other. What is important is that the source and cause of their evil deeds is the fact that their hearts are steeped in ignorance and unawareness.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 64-65

حَتَّي إِذَآ أَخَذْنَا مُتْرَفِيهِم بِالْعَذَابِ إِذَا هُمْ يَجْأَرُونَ

لاَ تَجْأَرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّكُم مِنَّا لاَ تُنصَرُونَ

64. "Until, when We seize the luxurious ones of them with punishment, behold, they groan."
65. " (It will be said to them:) 'Groan not this day! Surely you will not be helped by Us!"

The Qur'anic word /yaj'arun/ means the howl of a dog or wolf when the animal is hurt. The likening of the groans of the tranquil negligent ones to the howl of a dog is a sign of their abjectness because of their worldly intoxication.

No other means except the Divine Punishment can awaken this conceited proud and tranquil group that is drowning in the pleasures of the world. Until such a time they will remain ignorant and negligent wallowing in their wealth, power and comforts when they are punished, and at that time they will howl like beasts, and they groan because of the heaviness of the Divine chastisement.

The verse says:

"Until, when We seize the luxurious ones of them with punishment, behold, they groan."

The next verse, addressing them, implies: Groan not in supplication this day! Verily you will not be helped by Us!

It says;

" (It will be said to them:) 'Groan not this day! Surely you will not be helped by Us!"

Of course the wrongdoers are not limited to the '***mutrafin***':

('...those who receive the good things of this world ...'),

who are mentioned here, it is either because they are the chiefs and leaders of ignorance and deviation, or it is because their punishment will be more painful and severe.

The punishment mentioned here may be the punishment in this world, in the Hereafter or in both, and when Allah punishes them in this world or in the Hereafter they will cry loudly and supplicate. But at that time the dice has already been cast and the chastisement has been decided, so they will not be able to return.

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Allah, The Blessed and The Exalted, has sworn that three groups have no place in Paradise: The group that rejects the commandments of Allah, the Almighty and Glorious; the group that does not obey the command of the leading Imam, and the group that does not give a believer his due."[32]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 66-67

قَدْ كَانَتْ ءَايَاتِي تُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ تَنكِصُون

مُسْتَكْبِرِينَ بِهِ سَامِراً تَهْجُرُونَ

66. "Indeed My Signs used to be rehearsed to you, but you used to turn back on your heels, "

67. “In arrogance: talking nonsense about it (the Qur’an), discoursing foolishly by night.”

Ignoring the prophets is not a sign of development and progress; rather it causes deterioration and regression. Divine rules and prescripts are essential to attaining perfection, and ignoring them causes our downfall,

(***“…you used to turn back on your heels.”***)

This holy verse actually tells us the primary cause of their ominous fate. It indicates that in former times Allah’s Signs used to be rehearsed to you, but (instead of learning a lesson from them) you used to turn back on your heels.

The holy verse says:

“Indeed My Signs used to be rehearsed to you, but you used to turn back on your heels, ”

The Qur’anic word /tankisun/ (here, turn back on ones heels) is derived from the word /nakas/ and means to regress or retreat. And the Arabic word /‘a’qab/ is the plural form of /‘aqib/ which means the heel of the foot. The whole sentence means that when some people hear something that they are abhorrent of, they get so disturbed that they turn back on their beefs and go back in retreat.

The next verse means that not only do they turned back by hearing the verses of Allah, but they also maintained an arrogant and dismissive attitude towards the object of their revulsion as well. Moreover, they used to hold their nightly gatherings and vilify the Prophet (S), The Holy Qur’an, and the believers.

The Qur’an continues saying:

“In arrogance: talking nonsense about it (the Qur’an), foolishly by night.”

The Arabic word /samiran/ is derived from the word /samar/ which means a chat or conversation at night. Some interpreters have said that the actual meaning of this word is ‘the reflection of the moon at night’, in which darkness and light blend into each other.

This word is used for a nighttime conversation under the moonlight. It has been narrated that the Arab polytheists used to gather around the Ka‘bah on moonlit nights and talk against the Prophet (S). In Arabic, a dark or wheat colored person is described as /samra’/, for whiteness and blackness is mixed in him.

The Arabic word /tahjurun/ (talking nonsense) is derived from the word /hajr/ which originally means ‘to keep away from’ or to desert. It also means the delirious speech of a sick person whose words are, in that state, unpleasant and cause others go away. The Arabic word /hujr/, which is also related to that word, means obscene language that makes others leave the speaker.

This latter meaning is meant in the above verse. It means they sat up until late at nights and, as sick

ones, they talked in delivian and obscene language.

This is the way and method of the people who are weak, despicable, and lacking in intelligence. They do not choose to express their views in public in the light of day, and do not rely on their intellect and reason. Instead, they cowardly choose the darkness of the night when people are sleeping and cannot see them to vilify others, console each other and advance their evil aims.

The Holy Qur'an implies that the reason for their misery and punishment was that they were not brave enough to accept The Truth, refusing to submit to the Signs of Allah in humility and they did not treat the Prophet (S) with reason and respect. If they did they could find the path of the truth.

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verses 68-70

أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ أَمْ جَآءَهُم مَّا لَمْ يَأْتِ ءَابَآءَهُمُ الاَوَّلِينَ

أَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوا رَسُولَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَهُ مُنِكِرُونَ

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ بَلْ جَآءَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلْحَقِ كَارِهُونَ

68. "Have they not pondered over the statement** (**of the Qur'an**)**, or has anything come to them that did not come to their fathers of old?"
69. "Or do they not recognize their Messenger, that they reject him?"
70. "Or do they say: 'There is a madness in him'? Rather he has brought them the Truth, but most of them hate the Truth."

The first cause of a people's misfortune and misery is when they cease to think and reflect. Not only is the Holy Qur'an a book for recitation but it is a book for contemplation and reflection as well, and anyone who will ponder its words will discover its profound truths.

The former holy verses spoke about the excuses that the unbelievers made to justify their deeds, and the firm answer to them.

These verses concisely show five real reasons why the unbelievers shunned the truth:

First, the Qur'an says:

"Have they not pondered over the statement** (**of the Qur'an**)**…"

Following the previous verses which were about the unbelievers' opposition against the Prophet (S), the

first cause of their misery is that they did not think and ponder over the content of the Prophet’s call; were it the opposite, their problems would no longer have existed.

Secondly it says:

“...or has anything come to them that did not come to their fathers of old?”

This indicates that when the Prophet (S) had invited them to the belief in the Oneness of Allah, the belief in the Resurrection, and to good deeds and purity, they would make excuses that these were ideas too novel for them to accept, and that if they had been true, Allah Who is merciful to all human beings, would have revealed them to their ancestors.

However, when we consider the fact that the Prophet's message is the same in principle and origin as that of the previous prophets, this excuse becomes devoid of meaning.

The fourth reason that they proffered for shunning the truth is as the next verse says:

“Or do they not recognize their Messenger, that they reject him?”

They behaved as if the Prophet (S) was someone unknown to them and thus they were rather reluctant to give credence to his message. But they had known him quite well, for he had been among them for his whole life and was so faithful to his covenants and word that he gained fame among them as ‘the Trustworthy’ in Arabic, ‘Al Amin’.

They confessed to his knowledge and reason. His parents and his tribe were known for them. Again, this excuse lost its validity in the light of this verse.

The fifth excuse they advanced for rejecting the Prophet's message is mentioned in the verse which says:

“Or do they say: ‘There is a madness in him’?...”

This means mat although they might have known him well, they did not have confidence in the soundness of his intellect.

It was possible that his words could have been produced by madness, for they did not accord with public opinion; and disregarding the traditions is itself a reason for madness.

The Holy Qur’an refutes all of these excuses of theirs by immediately saying:

“...Rather he has brought them the Truth, but most of them hate the Truth.”

These are the words of wisdom but, because the wise words of the Qur’an were not in accord with their uncontrolled passions, they denied them and labeled them insane.

It is for this reason that the enemies of religion sully and scandalize the personalities of those close to Allah in order to preserve their corrupt ideologies. However, the truth must be proclaimed even though the majority of society might be averse to it.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 71

وَلَوِ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ وَمَن فِيهِنَّ بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُم بِذِكْرِهِمْ فَهُمْ عن ذِكْرِهِم مُعْرِضُونَ

71. "And if the Truth had followed their low desires, certainly the heavens and the earth, and whoever therein would have perished! Rather, We have sent them their Reminder (the Qur'an), but they turn away from their Reminder."

If the Truth accorded with people's desires, the order of existence would be destroyed for people's desires, even the desires of one person, never remain constant in different points of time.

Therefore, this noble verse says:

"And if the Truth had followed their low desires, certainly the heavens and the earth, and whoever therein would have perished!..."

This situation is because reason is not the only factor that determines people's motivations and desires for, in many cases, people also follow their evil passions. If the rules of existence were in conformity with these deviant drives, chaos, anarchy and corruption would prevail over the whole world!

In order to emphasize more this matter, the verse says:

"...Rather, We have sent them their Reminder (the Qur'an), but they turn away from their Reminder."[33]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 72-73

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ خَرْجاً فَخَرَاجُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

وَإِنَّكَ لَتَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَي صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

72. "Or is it that you ask them a recompense? But the recompense of your Lord is the best: He is the Best of the sustainers."
73. "And verily you call them unto the Straight Way."

The Arabic word /xarj/ means that which is consumed, however ‘kharaj’ means a fixed amount determined as a tax or rent on land.[34]

One must not ask for money to propagate religion. Allah is the One Who guarantees the sustenance of those who do that. This holy verse implies that whether the excuse of their escape from the truth was that the holy Prophet (S) might ask a recompense from them for his call, while the recompense of Allah would certainly be better, ands He is the Best for giving sustenance.

The verse says:

“Or is it that you ask them a recompense? But the recompense of your Lord is the best: He is the Best of the sustainers.”

Undoubtedly if a spiritual leader asks people for material reward and recompense for his call, not only would he provide an excuse for some pretext seekers to avoid him because of not having the financial resources, but he could also be accused of using his call to the Truth as a business to earn a living.

Furthermore, what does this human being have to give to another? Is not all sustenance in the hands of Allah, the Provider and the All-Powerful? The previous verses, however, have already shown that the five major excuses that these blind-hearted people advanced to avoid yielding to the Truth and justified their opposition with only unfounded pretexts.

The Qur’an here illustrates the sincerity of the Prophet (S) and the truth of his call; it is that he does not seek any material gain from the people. If he did so, it would have provided one more excuse for the obstinate unbelievers to use against him.

As a general conclusion, the next verse says:

“And verily you call them unto the Straight Way.”

It is ‘the Straight Way’ whose signs are obvious for those who do not blind themselves and soon it will be evident to those who are not minute.

We know that the Straight Way is the shortest distance between two points and is the only way, but there are endless divergent paths to its left and right.

In some narrations ‘the Straight Way’ has been interpreted to mean the guardianship of Imam Ali (as)[35], but as we have said may times such narrations are the statement of some of the clear examples of the original meaning and they never contrast the existence of other examples, such as: the Qur’an, belief in Allah, Resurrection, Holy war, and justice.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 74

وإِنَّ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالاَخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ لَنَاكِبُونَ

74. "And verily those who do not believe in the Hereafter are deviating from the Way."

Having faith in the Resurrection keeps us upon the Straight Way, and the lack of faith in the Resurrection makes us deviate from it.

That is why, the Qur'an in this verse says:

"And verily those who do not believe in the Hereafter are deviating from the Way."

The Arabic word /nakib/ is derived from the words /nakab/ and /nakub/ meaning deviation and turning back the world.

It is clear that the purpose of 'the Way', mentioned in this verse, is 'the Straight Way' which was mentioned in the former verse.

Certainly he who deviates from 'the Straight Way' in this world will deviate from the way that leads to Paradise in the Hereafter and will fall into Hell, for whatever a person has in Hereafter are the direct results of his actions in the world.

The verse stresses the relation of lack of faith in the Hereafter to deviation from the Way of Truth. This is because man does not feel any sense of responsibility when he does not believe in the Resurrection.

Imam Ali (as) said:

"Allah has appointed us, (the religious leaders), as His gates (towards realizing His gnosis) and His path and His way by which (people can) reach Him. Thus, those who deviate from our guardianship or prefer others over us verily they are diverging from the Way of the Truth."[36]

Here are some characteristics and qualities of the religious leaders extracted from the former verses.

These Divine leaders were known for their goodness and their kindnesses.

If they were as unknown and mysterious, as the verse says:

"Or do they not recognize their messenger, that they reject him?"[37]

The hypocrites would have had an excuse to dismiss their known Divine call because they would have been unknown to them.

In the course of their missions, they have never yielded to the desires and whims of people, unlike today where leaders are expected to submit to public opinion. They remained steady in propagating the doctrine of the Truth, even though it might not have pleased a large number of people.

In addition, they did not ask for any material reward for their mission and bore all kinds of deprivation, for relying on others for their sustenance would have constricted their freedom of thought and language to present the Divine message.

So only the Prophet's Family (Ahl-ul-Bayt) (as) possess these noble qualities, therefore the Prophet (S) said:

"The likeness of my Ahl-ul-Bayt (progeny) is similar to Noah's Ark; those who embark upon this ship will be saved, and those who do not embark upon it will be drowned."

This tradition has been narrated by one hundred of great Sunni scholars, and among the Shi'ite scholars, it has gained the state of successive transmission. It has been mentioned in the following books: Al-Ghadir, Vol. 4, P. 177, Ihqaq ul-Haqq, part 9, P. 270, and Nafahat ul-'Azhar fi Khulasah 'Abaqat ul-'Anwar[38] part 4, P. 11.

In this context, there is another famous tradition that has been successively transmitted by Shi'ites and Sunnis: Jabir ibn 'Abdullah-i-'Ansari said:

"I said:

'O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulul-'Amr, those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abitalib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Hussayn; then Ali-ibn-il-Hussayn; then Mohammad-ibn-Ali; known in the Turah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! when you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, - Ja'far-ibnMuhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im, whose name and sir-name is the same as mine.

He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants. He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (al-'Askari).

This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and the Wests of the worlds, and this is the very personality who will be absent from his followers and his lovers in which his mastership

can not be proved by a statement of anyone except for the one whose heart Allah tests for Faith."

This tradition has been quoted in the Commentary of Sura An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 59. Again[39], this tradition has been narrated in Manhaj us-Sadiqin, The Great Commentary, and other commentaries such as Safi, Majma' ul-Bayan, Burhan, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Jawami'-ul-Jami', and so on. Moreover Sunnis have also narrated this tradition: you can refer to Ihqaq ul-Haqq, Vol. 3, P. 425, and Fakhr-i-Razi's commentary after the above-mentioned verse, Yanabi' ul Mawaddah, P. 117, Faraid us-Samtayn by Hamwini, Vol. 1, P. 312 Al-Ghadir by the Late Amini, 'Abaqat ul-'Anwar, and other books by Sunnis and Shi'ites.

Also we read in Yanabi'-ul-Mawaddah narrated from the book Mawaddat al-Qurba by Sayyid Ali Hamadani Shafe'i that Abuthar Ghaffari said that the Prophet (S) said:

"Ali is the gate of my knowledge. After me he will tell my people what has been sent to me. After me, loving him is to have faith, being hostile towards him will be hypocrisy, and looking at him with affection will be worship."

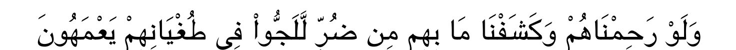
This tradition has been narrated by Daylami in Firdaus al-Akhbar, Hamwini in Fara'id-us-Samtayn, and Ibn Maghazili Shafi'i in Manaqib.

It has been cited in the Book of Wasilah, and Nuzul-us-Sa'rin fi Ahadith Sayyid-ul-Mursalin from Umm-us-Salamah, the Prophet's wife who said that the Prophet (S) said:

"Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) and his Shiites will be successful on the Day of Resurrection"

This tradition has been narrated by Hamwini Shafi'i in Fara'id us-Samtayn, chapter 21 and Manawi in Kunuz-ul-Haqa'iq, in the margin of Jami'-us-Saqir, Vol. 2, P. 21 by Suyuti, and Sibt ibn Jawzi in Tathkirah Khawas ul-'A'immah, P. 31, and Kharazmi in Manaqib, P. 66, have narrated it from Umm-us-Salamah. It has also been narrated in the book The Explanation of Jami'-us-Saqir and the book Suyuti, Vol. 2, P. 21

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 75



75. "If We had mercy on them and removed the distress which is on them, they would obstinately persist in their transgression, blindly wandering on."

Occasion of the Revelation

In the books of commentary on titled: Kanz ul-Daqa'iq and Ruh ul-Bayan, we read that once there had

been a famine in Mecca and Abu Sufyan asked the Prophet (S) to pray. The Prophet (S) prayed and because of this the famine ended, then this verse was revealed.

Wealth and comfort are manifestations of Divine mercy, but unbelieving men misuse their opportunities and respites.

The Qur'an says:

(***"...those who believe not in the Hereafter... would obstinately persist in their transgression."***)

The previous verses spoke of the various excuses that the deniers of the Truth made to disobey the call of the prophets. In these verses Allah talks about awakening them and giving them the final argument.

The verse indicates that first of all Allah bestows blessings upon them to awake. Then it implies that even if Allah showers blessings upon them and keeps away waves of disaster from them, they are so impure that they persist in their disobedience and they remain wandered in this field.

The verse says:

"If We had mercy on them and removed the distress which is on them, they would obstinately persist in their transgression, blindly wandering on."

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 76

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُونَ

76. "And indeed We inflicted chastisement on them, but they were not submissive unto their Lord, nor do they humble themselves, "

An Islamic tradition says that the Arabic word /'istikanat/ means 'to humble oneself', and the word /tadarru'/ means 'to raise the hands in supplication'.

The previous verse was about the obstinate unbelievers, indicating that if Allah had mercy on them they would obstinate and do not improve themselves. It indicates Allah grasped them with punishment, but they did not humble themselves unto their Lord, because: there is often no use in preaching to a black hearted one.

The verse also implies that sometimes they were taught a lesson through calamities to be on their guard but they had no effect upon them.

The verse says:

"And indeed We inflicted chastisement on them, but they were not submissive unto their Lord,

nor do they humble themselves, "

The Qur'anic word /tadarru'/ is derived from the Arabic word /dara'a/, which means to grasp an udder, and the word /tadarru'/ means the one who milks. This word has been extended to mean the yielding associated with humility.

Thus the verse implies that these catastrophic events did not remove them from the state of conceit and transgression and they did not submit the truth.

If some narrations say that the word /tadarru'/ means raising the hands at the time of prayer and supplication, this is actually expressing one of the extensions of this vast meaning.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 77

حَتَّي إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَاباً ذَا عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ إِذَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ

77. "Until, when We open against them a gate of severe chastisement, behold! They will get into despair at it."

The Arabic word /mublis/ is derived from the word /iblas/, which means the grief and sorrow that overcomes man after a severely traumatic and bitter event that usually makes him silent, astonished and full of despair. Of course, the gates of Divine chastisement are closed to us, but our obstinacy and stubbornness towards the Truth cause Allah to open these gates to us.

The following principles are observed in all the stages of education to which Allah subjects man:

1. He behaves kindly and gracefully with him.

2. He punishes him in order to admonish him.

3. He often inflicts ultimate punishment upon him causing misery and helplessness

(***"...a severe chastisement..."***)

That is why the Qur'an in this verse indicates that Allah continues giving them these favours, blessings and awakening chastisements when they continue their disobedience and their obstinacy.

Until when, as the verse says:

"Until, when We open against them a gate of severe chastisement, behold! They will get into despair at it."

In fact, Allah inflicts two kinds of punishment:

A) Punishments that teach

B) Punishments that obliterate and cause despair Punishments that teach put man into troubles so that he can experience his weakness and incapability and stop being conceited.

Punishments that obliterate are inflicted upon incorrigible people to root them out, for they have no right to live in this system. They are thorns in the path of human perfection and must be eliminated.

With regard to the objective of the Qur'anic phrase,

"...a gate of severe chastisement..."

there are different views among the commentators:

Some say that it is death and the punishment of the Day of Resurrection respectively.

Some others say that it refers to the severe famine that had afflicted the unbelievers for some years due to the Prophet's (S) curse. Staple items of food became very scarce and the people had to eat things that none like to consume them in normal case.

Some say that it refers to the painful punishment particular to the incorrigible ones that the Muslim fighters inflicted upon the unbelievers in War of Badr.

Another possibility is that it does not refer to any special group, but is a general rule governing Divine punishments that start with mercy and are then followed by punishments that educate people and, finally, ending up with punishments that obliterate.

1. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 4. Abwab ud Du'a'. Bab 67, tradition 4
2. Bihar Vol. 11, p. 58
3. Sura Al- Baqara, No. 2, verse 172
4. Sura Fatir, No. 35, verse 10
5. Sura 'Isra', No. 17, verse 70
6. The commentary of Qurtuby, Vol. 7, following this verse
7. Maraqy, the commentary
8. Bihar, Vol. 100, p. 9
9. Safinat ul-Bihar, part 'Halal', p. 298
10. Bihar, Vol. 100, p. 170
11. Bihar, Vol. 100, p. 5
12. Bihar, Vol. 100, p. 9
13. Safinat ul-Bihar, part 'Halal', p. 298
14. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 4, p. 5
15. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 4, p. 5
16. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 4, p. 5
17. Bihar, Vol. 100, p. 9
18. Furu' ul- Kafi, Vol. 5, p. 125
19. Safinat ul-Bihar, part 'Haram', p. 244

20. Bihar, Vol. 100, p. 16
21. Safinah, p. 244, and Wasa'il, Vol. 6, p. 16
22. Majmueh Warram
23. Madynat ul-Balaqah, Vol. 2, p. 479
24. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 1, p. 60
25. Mishkat ul-'Anwar, p. 388
26. Sura Al-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 23
27. Sura Noah, No. 71, verse 7
28. verse 57
29. verse 58
30. verse 59
31. verse 60
32. Mizan ul-Hikmah, p. 806, narrated from Saduq's khisal
33. Using the Arabic phrase/□ikrihim/ can be interpreted as reminding them or awakening them. It may also mean their respect, honor, and their remembrance in human society.
34. Mufradat by Raqib
35. Nur-uth-Thaqalqyn, The commentary, Vol. 3, p. 548 and Safi, The commentary
36. 'Usul Kafi, narrated from Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 3, p. 549
37. The Current Sura, Verse 69
38. by Sayyid Ali Hussayni Milani
39. "O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those charged with authority ('Ulu-l-'Amr) among you ..."

Section 5: Even the Disbelievers Helplessly Acknowledge the Glory of Allah

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 78-79

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالأَبْصَارَ وَالأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلاً مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

وَهُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

78. "He it is Who produced for you hearing, and eyes, and hearts (minds); (very) little it is what you give thanks."
79. "And He it is Who multiplied you in the earth, and unto Him you shall be mustered."

Remembrance of Divine Blessings often paves the way for gnosis and thanksgiving. Therefore, The Holy Qur'an tries to arouse this sense of thanksgiving by mentioning the Divine blessings.

The verse says:

"He it is Who produced for you hearing, and eyes, and hearts* (*minds*)*;* (*very*) *little it is what you give thanks."

The emphasis is put on these three things, 'hearing, sight and understanding', because they are the main means of gnosis. Physical phenomena are mostly perceived through the ear and eye. Mental issues are understood through the mind.

To comprehend how important the senses of vision and audition are, it will be enough to imagine the state that man would be in if these senses were lost, how limited his world would be, how empty of light and awareness!

By losing these senses, he might even lose other faculties under his control, such as the ability to speak, which is assisted in its function through audition and acts as a means of communicating with others. (Those who are congenitally deaf are usually always impaired of speech as a consequence.)

Thus, these two senses are the keys to the world of perceptible things. The mind, however, is the key to the metaphysical world, and it criticizes, concludes, generalizes, and analyzes the data provided by those two senses.

Should not those who do not thank Allah for these great means of knowledge be blamed and justly punished? Does not contemplating the intricacies of these three faculties suffice to make man familiar with his Creator?

It is obvious why the blessings of the ear and eye precede that of the understanding. But why does the blessing of the ear come before that of the eye? Scientific research has shown that the ear of a newborn starts to function before its eyes begin to do so.

This is because the environment of the womb is without light and the eyes can see nothing. The ear is not the same. The fetus can hear while in the womb and is familiar with the sound of its mother's heart and even her voice.

The mention of these three invaluable favours motivates us to seek knowledge of the One Who has granted them to us. Some of the scholars of religion say that such knowledge leads us to thanking Him for these gifts, which is the basis for the rational obligation of knowing Allah.

The next verse speaks of one of the most important signs of Allah, which is the creation of man from the earth:

"And He it is Who multiplied you in the earth..."

And, because the human being is made of earth, he will return to it, and will be raised up and then will

be mustered unto Him.

The verse continues saying:

"...and unto Him you shall be mustered."

If we ponder over the fact that we are made of earth, it will be enough for us, the mortals, to know the Giver of Existence and understand the possibility of the Resurrection.

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verse 80

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَلَهُ اخْتِلاَفُ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

80. "And He it is Who gives life and death, and to Him belongs the alternation of the night and the day. Have you then no sense?"

Monotheism is mainly achieved through contemplation and reflection.

(***".. .Have you then no sense?"***)

After speaking about the proliferation of human beings, the Qur'an turns to the issue of life, death, and the alternation of day and night which are of the great signs of Allah.

It says:

"And He it is Who gives life and death, and to Him belongs the alternation of the night and the day. Have you then no sense?"

Thus, these recent three verses start with motivating us to know Allah and then end with mentioning some of the most important signs in the microcosm and the macrocosm. In other words, they mention man's journey from birth to death and his return to Allah, all of which, are at the mercy of Allah and decided by His will.

Note: The creation of life and death is juxtaposed with the creation of 'day' and 'night', for light and darkness in the world of existence are like death and life in the world of living creatures.

As the world of existence moves and functions under the rays of light and becomes still and motionless under the curtain of darkness, living creatures also begin their movement with the light of life and cease it and its function with the darkness of death. Moreover, both of them are gradual phenomena.

The alternation of day and night means that one of them takes the place of the other. It can also mean their gradual lengthening and contraction, which result in the four seasons of the year and are important factors in the life of the plants. These factors all serve to guide us to knowing and thanking Allah.

Thus, at the end of the verse it says:

"…Have you then no sense?"

Some Traditions On the Intellect

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"Intellect is something by which Paradise will be detained and through which the pleasure of Allah is achieved."[1]

2. Imam Ali (as) said:

"The intellect guides and ignorance misleads."[2]

3. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Allah, the Glorified, has not distributed anything better than the intellect among His servants."[3]

4. Imam Hassan al-Mujtaba (as) said:

"By means of the intellect one can achieve both the goodness and reward of this world and the Hereafter and the one who has no intellect is deprived of the benefits and advantages of them all together."[4]

5. Imam Rida (as) said:

"The intellect is the friend of every man, and his enemy is his ignorance."[5]

6. Imam Ali (as) said:

"One cannot overcome the world except by the power of the intellect."[6]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"Man's religion is his intellect and whoever has no intellect has no religion."[7]

8. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Pondering much on science (and knowledge) opens the gate of the intellect."[8]

9. The Prophet (S) said:

"Everything has a tool (and a support), and the believer's tool (and support) is the intellect. Everything has a vehicle and man's vehicle is the intellect. Everything has an end and the end of worship is the intellect.

Every nation has a guardian and the guardian of the worshippers is the intellect. Every merchant has a capital and the capital of the strivers is the intellect. Everything ruined is mended by something and the Hereafter is mended by the intellect. Every traveler has a tent in which he takes refuge and the tent of the Muslim is the intellect."[9]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 81-83

بَلْ قَالُوا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الاَوَّلُونَ

قَالُوا أَءِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَاباً وَعِظَاماً ءَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ

لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَءَابَآؤُنَا هَذَا مِن قَبْلُ إِنْ هَذَآ إِلاَّ أَسَاطِيرُ الاَوَّلِينَ

81. "Nay, but they say the like of what the ancients said."
82. "They say: 'What! When we die and become dust and bones, shall we then be raised up again?"
83."Certainly we and our fathers have been promised this aforetime; this is naught but fables of the ancient."

The Arabic word /'asatir/ is the plural form of /'usturah/, meaning a story or legend that is false. The word /'usturah/ itself is derived from the word 'satr', meaning line. Thus words that come one after the other can be said to line up.

The Qur'an mentions nine times from the tongue of the unbelievers this word to oppose the message of the prophets. They had no reasons or arguments to refute them; their only responses to the Truth were incredulity and denial,

(***"...shall we then be raised up again?..."***)

In the previous verses, those who denied the oneness of Allah and the Resurrection were called to ponder the world of existence and the signs in the microcosm and macrocosm. Now, as these verses indicate, they have abandoned intellectual thinking and simply, blindly imitate their ancestors, and have dismissed the Resurrection as tales of the ancients.

The verse says:

"Nay, but they say the like of what the ancients said."

But their argument about the denial of Resurrection is also the same thing that the ancients used to say.

Then their exact words are reiterated in the next verse:

"They say: 'What! When we die and become dust and bones, shall we then be raised up again?"

This question of theirs shows that the unbelievers were rather ignorant, for if they had contemplated their creation in this world, that is, the possibility of their coming into existence from nonexistence, then they would have been able to conclude that their resurrection from the dead would have been just as possible and they would confess that Allah is their Creator.

In the next verse, they indicate that this is an unbelievable action. Such things have been promised to us and our forefathers before. They are nothing but fables of the men of old.

The verse says:

"Certainly we and our fathers have been promised this aforetime; this is naught but fables of the ancient."

By this, they mean that their re-creation, the Reckoning, Paradise, and Hell are nothing but mere fancy.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 84-87

قُل لِمَنِ الاَرْضُ وَمن فِيهَآ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلاَ تَذَكَّرُونَ

قُلْ مَن رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

84. "Say: 'Whose is the earth and whosoever is in it, if you have knowledge?'"
85. "They will say: 'Allah's'. Say: 'Will you not then remember?'"
86. "Say: 'Who is the Lord of the Seven Heavens, and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?'"
87. "They will say: 'Allah's'. Say: 'Will you not then keep from evil?'"

The Arabic word /rabb/ means an owner who intends to maintain and manage his estate. It also means educator and trainer. The Qur'anic word "***Arsh'"*** is used here to mean the Throne of Allah, which is beyond the Seven Heavens. When this word is applied to Allah it means the totality of the world of existence, which is ruled by Allah.

"…His Throne includes the heavens and the earth…"[10]

Since the unbelievers and the polytheists were more afraid of the Resurrection than anything else, they consequently avoided it and their responsibilities by making various kinds of excuses and using delicate tricks. The Holy Qur'an thus placed emphasis on the Resurrection and elaborately explained it.

Thus, in the verses under discussion, the Holy Qur'an refutes the faulty logic of the rejecters of Resurrection with three arguments:

1. Allah's ownership of the world of existence.

2. His Lordship.

3. His sovereignly over the whole world of existence.

The conclusion here is that from every aspect Allah is capable of causing the Resurrection and His justice and wisdom necessitate that the Hereafter must be a reality after the end of this world.

It is notable that in the answers to every one of the questions posed in the verses above, the unbelievers confess the reality of Allah (s.w.t.) as the Lord and Master, contradicting their very attitude and belief.

At first, the Qur'an announces:

"Say: 'Whose is the earth and whosoever is in it, if you have knowledge?'"

Here is their answer:

"They will say: 'Allah's'. Say: 'Will you not then remember?'"

This clear answer is based on their innate disposition that testifies to the belief in Allah, the Creator of the existence.

This answer, however, contradicts the egoistic claims that issue from their mouths and because of this the Qur'an replies to them:

"Will you not then remember?"

After such a clear and explicit confession, how could they think that a human being's resurrection after death would be unlikely and beyond Allah's all embracing power?

Through the next holy verse, the Qur'an orders that the unbelievers should be asked again:

"Say: 'Who is the Lord of the Seven Heavens, and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?'"

Once again, they answer, automatically out of their own innate monotheistic disposition and their belief in

Allah, as the Creator of the whole existence.

The verse says:

"They will say: 'Allah's'…"

But in spite of this explicit confession, they still do not fear Allah and deny the Resurrection and the return of man to life again, so they are asked in response:

"…Say: 'Will you not then keep from evil?'"

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 88-90

قُلْ مَن بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلاَ يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ فَأَنَّي تُسْحَرُونَ

بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

88. "Say: 'In Whose hand is the dominion of all things, and Who protects (***all***)***, but is never protected, if you have knowledge?'"***
89. "They will say: '(***It belongs***) ***to Allah.' Say: 'How then are you bewitched?'"***
90. "Nay, We have brought them the Truth, and verily they are liars."

In the first holy verse here they are asked again about the sovereignty over the heavens and the earth.

The noble verse announces:

"Say: 'In Whose hand is the dominion of all things, and Who protects (***all***)***, but is never protected, if you have knowledge?'"***

They know who the absolute sovereign is, for here is their answer:

"They will say: '(***It belongs***) ***to Allah.'…"***

Nevertheless, they say something far from the truth their hearts claim and thus they are deluded.

"…Say: 'How then are you bewitched?'"

These are the facts that they confess to at every stage. They acknowledge Him as the Owner of existence, and they confess that He is the Creator of all things and is the All Wise Manager and Ruler.

Can He Who has such power and ability, Whose dominion is so all pervasive not be able to gather together and reconstitute a human being who had passed away and had returned to dust, given that he had been made from dust in the beginning?

Why did they evade the facts? Why did they condemn the Prophet (S) as insane or as a sorcerer, when their hearts confessed that these facts were true? Indeed they belied with their egos what they believed in the core of their being.

The verse says:

"Nay, We have brought them the Truth, and verily they are liars."

This phrase implies that what had been sent to them through the Prophet (S) was not magic or anything else, it was the Truth but they refused to acknowledge it.

Allah and His prophets had left no stone unturned when they proclaimed the message. Those who have closed their eyes to it have deviated and, indeed, many of them stubbornly stick to their lies.

From the verses of The Holy Qur'an, it can be accurately inferred that the deniers of the Resurrection were mostly against the idea of a physical resurrection. They thought it is incredulous that a human being, who had disintegrated into dust, could be returned to life.

Because of this, many verses stress upon the power of Allah and show examples of it in the world of existence in order to eliminate this skepticism and their wonder.

In the verses above, this issue is addressed in three ways:

A) His power over the earth and its inhabitants.

B) The heavens and the Mighty Throne.

C) The power of His management over the world of creation.

These three ways can be placed under one heading; guiding and challenging the unbelievers while they are presented as responses to their various opinions.

There is another probability that each of these three issues refers to one of view points of the deniers of Resurrection. It implies that if their denial is based on the idea that human beings that have been dead and gone would be outside Allah's power, they are wrong, for they acknowledge that Allah is the Lord of the earth and all that is within it.

If it is because resurrecting the dead requires a powerful Lord, they themselves call Him the Lord of the heavens and the 'Arsh.

If this denial is because they doubt the existence of an all powerful administrator of this world and the world to come or the giving of a new life to the dead, this denial would not be valid because they have acknowledged the power of His management over the entire world of existence and that He looks after the needs of all creatures. Thus, there is no room for their denial.

The concordance of the unbelievers' answers:

(***"They will say: '(It belongs) to Allah..."***)11

strengthens the first commentary.

It is interesting that the first, second, and third answers respectively appear in the following forms:

"...Will you not then remember?"12

"...Will you not then keep from evil?"13

"...How then are you bewitched?"14

These reproaches and reprimands, indeed, as the discourse progresses show a logical progression in educating and guiding the unbelievers. Condemning a person has three levels; first, a light upbraiding, then a firm reprimand, and finally a severe scolding.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 91-92

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِن وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذاً لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلاَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَي بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَتَعَالَي عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

91. "No son has Allah begot, nor is there any god along with Him, else each god would have certainly taken off that which he had created, and some of them would certainly have risen up over others. Glorified be Allah above what they describe!"
92. " (He is) the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible! So exalted be He, above what they ascribe as partners (unto Him)!"

Having belief in any kind of offspring for Allah is forbidden; (whether considering Jesus as the son of Allah or the angels or others).

In the previous verses, the subject of the Resurrection and Allah's ownership, sovefeignty and Lordship were discussed. The verses now under consideration criticize the ideological base of polytheism and

state some of the deviations of the polytheists with their responses. The Qur’an answers them in these verses.

It says:

“No son has Allah begot, nor is there any god along with Him…”

The belief that Allah had begotten an offspring or some children was not limited to the Christians, who held that Jesus (as)was God's actual son. This belief was also current among some polytheists.

They thought that the angels were God’s daughters and there is evidence to assume that, perhaps, the Christians had taken this concept from old polytheists. Since offspring share in the nature of their parents, they assumed that Jesus, the angels, and the like also shared in the Divine nature of God which is one of the most common characteristics of polytheism.

The verse then mentions the reason why the concept of a plurality of gods should be rejected. It implies that if Allah had had partners and more than one god had ruled over the world, each of these gods would have managed and established his control over the realm of his own creations.

Consequently different parts of the universe would end up being managed under different laws and systems. This would have given rise to chaos and disorder in the universe and this does not accord with the unity of creation that we witness around us.

The Holy Qur’an says:

“No son has Allah begot, nor is there any god along with Him, else each god would have certainly taken off that which he had created, and some of them would certainly have risen up over others…”

In the end, as a general conclusion, the verse says:

“…Glorified be Allah above what they describe!”

The result of this discourse is that we can discern a unified system of laws that governs the world of existence. These laws are the same everywhere in the heavens and the earth.

They are found, unchanged, regulating and governing the behaviour of the minutest sub atomic particle and the components of the solar system and other great galaxies. Indeed, if an atom is magnified, it will appear like a miniature solar system, and, on the contrary, if solar system is seen from afar it will look like an atom.

Modern researches conducted on .distant objects in space by experts from different disciplines also show that there is unity in the general order of the world.

On the other side, the idea of a multiplicity of gods necessitates the existence of differences and contrasts between them, for if two objects were alike in every aspect, they would become one object and the state of multiplicity between them would be meaningless.

If we suppose that the world of existence had numerous gods, this polycentrism would have an effect on the order of the universe. This would result in a lack of unity in the order of creation.

Furthermore, all beings seek to perfect themselves. This is true unless an entity is perfect in every aspect, in which case it would be meaningless for it to seek perfection.

The logical conclusion of a plurality of gods, each having separate sovereignties would be that, because of the limitation of their spheres of sovereignty, they would not be perfect and each of them would naturally seek to perfect itself.

Each one of them would want to bring the entire world of existence under its sovereignty, and thus they would compete with each other for dominance and plunge the order of existence into chaos and confusion.

One might counter this argument and say that if we assume that these gods were wise and merciful they would certainly be able to manage the universe cooperatively. In other words, the problem of chaos and disorder could certainly be eliminated if these gods formed a council of themselves to manage the universe.

The answer to this question is not very complicated. Their wisdom does not negate their multiplicity. When we say they are multiple, it means that they are not similar to each other. Ifthey were similar in every aspect, they would have been one god.

Therefore, whenever there is multiplicity, differences and dissimilarities would certainly be found, and this would influence these gods in their actions and their managing of the universe which results chaos and confusion.

Concerning this subject there is a tradition that says:

One day Hisham ibn Hakam asked Imam Sadiq (as):

“What is the reason that Allah is unique and singular?”

The Imam answered:

“Because there is union and coherence in the management of the universe and the creation is perfect, as Allah, the Exalted, has said:

‘If there were therein **(*other*)** ***gods besides Allah, they would both*** **(*the heavens and the earth*)** ***go to ruin…’***[15]*”*[16]

The next verse gives another answer to these unbelievers who advance the absurdity of a multiplicity of gods.

It implies that He does not know any gods that unbelievers claim, where it says:

" (He is) the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible!..."

Allah knows all things that exist both in the visible and invisible worlds. It is therefore impossible for these unbelievers to know about the existence of another god unknown to the Creator.

The content of this verse is similar to verse 18 of Sura Yunus, No. 10, where Allah says:

"...say: 'will you inform Allah of what He does not know either in the heavens or in the earth?..."

Finally, it reduces the superstitious imaginations of the polytheists to nothing:

"...So exalted be He, above what they ascribe as partners (unto Him)!"

Similarly, the end of this verse is just like that of verse 18 of Sura Yunus, No 10. It says:

"...Glory be to Him! High be He exalted above what they associate (with Him)."

And it shows that both of the verses follow the same subject.

This sentence also threatens the polytheists, for it means that Allah is aware of both their hidden and manifest secrets. He knows these arguments very well and will judge and punish them in His Court when the time comes.

Concerning the phrase,

" (He is) the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible!...",

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"What has not taken place is 'the Unseen' and what has taken place is 'the Visible'."

1. Madinat ul-Balaghah, Vol. 2, p. 519
2. Madinat ul-Balaghah, Vol. 2, p. 515
3. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 6, p. 80 and Vol. 2, p. 745
4. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 111
5. Al-kafi, Vol. 1, 11, 4
6. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 7
7. Nahj ul-Fasahah, p. 330
8. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 116
9. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il, Vol. 2, p. 286
10. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 255
11. Verse 89 in the above

12. verse 85
13. verse 87
14. verse 89
15. Sura Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 22
16. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary, Vol. 3, p. 417 & 418 and Tawhid Sauq

Section 6: To Return Good For Evil and to Be Patient

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 93-95

قُل رَّبِّ إِمَّا تُرِيَنِّي مَا يُوعَدُونَ

رَبِّ فَلاَ تَجْعَلْنِي فِي الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

وإِنَّا عَلَي أَن نُرِيَكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقَادِرُونَ

93. "Say: 'My Lord! If You show me what (chastisement) they are promised, '"
94."My Lord! Then set me, not among the unjust people."
95. "And verily We are able to show you that which We promise them."

These verses are addressed to the Prophet (S), but they have the same objective as the previous verses; that is, they threaten the unbelievers and polytheists with Divine punishment.

In the beginning, Allah commands His Prophet (S):

"Say: 'My Lord! If You show me what (chastisement) they are promised, '"

(Meaning their punishment in the War of Badr), then put me not among the wrongdoing folk. This means that when Allah decides to send down the punishment upon the unbelievers, He would separate the Prophet away from them so that by Allah's grace and mercy he would not be involved with the affliction of the oppressors at that time.

There is no doubt that the conduct and program of the Prophet (S) could not make him subject to Divine punishment. It is also a fact that the Divine law is not indiscriminate and would not suffer the good to be

punished with the guilty. Even if there were one dutiful worshipper of Allah in a whole society of evildoers, Allah would save that individual.

The verse says:

"My Lord! Then set me not among the unjust people."

By this prayer of the Prophet (S) Allah intends to warn the unbelievers that the issue is so serious that by Divine command the great Prophet of Islam himself sought the protection of Allah from the consequences of their beliefs and actions, and secondly it is a lesson for the followers of this Prophet that they are not safe from Allah's punishment and must always seek His protection regardless of whatever state they might be in.

But what kind of punishment is it? Most interpreters believe that it refers to the worldly punishments that Allah had inflicted upon the polytheists, including the disastrous severe defeat they had suffered in the Battle of Badr.[1] There are other interpreters, however, that think that the verse probably includes the punishment both in this world and in the Hereafter.[2]

Bearing in mind that this Sura was revealed in Mecca when the believers were forced to undergo many hardships, these verses gave them much solace and comfort.

The next verse emphasizes the fact that Allah is Almighty, and removes any doubt and uncertainty about the victory of the believers over their enemies and gives them solace.

The verse says:

"And verily We are able to show you that which We promise them."

As history has ever shown, this power of Allah has been demonstrated over and over in different places and on different occasions after the Battle of Badr where a much smaller military force inflicted a major defeat upon a much larger and well equipped enemy by Allah's command.

Allah gave His Prophet solace by saying that He had the power to punish the unbelievers but He often postpones their punishment for various reasons some of which have been listed below:

1. They are given time and opportunity to repent.

2. They are given a final argument.

3. In their future generations some believers are going to be born.

4. For the sake of the Prophet (S) who is the cause of blessings and grace.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 96-98

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةَ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ

وَقُل رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ

وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَن يَحْضُرُونِ

96. "Repel evil with that which is best. We know best what they describe."
97. "And say: 'My Lord! I seek refuge in You from the suggestions of Satans, "
98. "And I seek refuge in You, my Lord, lest they attend me'."

The Prophet (S) has been taught by Allah and has been called upon to treat the enemies of Islam in the best manner.

Evil can be repelled with evil, but this method is not appropriate for a spiritual leader. Thus, the Prophet (S) has been explicitly ordered to behave with this group with moderation, compassion and justice, to repel their evil deeds with indulgence, forgiveness, and goodness, and to answer their unpleasant words with reason and intelligence.

The Noble Qur'an in this holy verse says:

"Repel evil with that which is best..."

"...We know best what they describe."

The verse means that Allah knows that they aggravated the Prophet (S) with inappropriate deeds, harsh words, and various kinds of persecutions, but he was not commissioned to reciprocate their violence and vilifications in like manner, rather he should respond to their evil deeds against him with good manner which is one of the best ways to awaken the ignorant and those who have been deceived.

In addition to this, the Prophet (S) should rely on Allah, as the verse suggests:

"And say: 'My Lord! I seek refuge in You from the suggestions of Satans, "

It means that not only should he (S) seek refuge in Allah from the suggestions of Devils, but he should also take refuge in Allah in order to prevent them from coming to him and taking part in his assemblies causing hurt and temptation by their presence.

So the next verse says:

“And I seek refuge in You, my Lord, lest they attend me’.”

Note to Some Points

1) The Qur’anic word ‘hamazat’ is the plural form of the word ‘humazah’, meaning intense release, discharge, and stimulation. The Arabic letter ‘hamzah’ is called by the same name because it is articulated with force at the back of the throat.

Some interpreters are of the opinion that the Arabic words ‘hamz’, ‘qamz’ and ‘ramz’ have the same meaning, but ‘ramaz’ is light, ‘qamaz’ is stronger than ‘ramaz’, and ‘hamaz’ is even more so.

Regarding the fact that the Arabic word /šayatin/ is plural, it refers to all Satans whether manifest and concealed, man and jinn.

In the Commentary by Ali ibn Ibrahim we read that the Imam (as) concerning the meaning of the verse:

“And say: ‘My Lord! I seek refuge in You from the suggestions of Satans, ”

said that it meant that which of the satanic suggestions that enter your heart.[3]

When the Prophet (S), who is infallible and divinely protected from sin and error, asks for such a thing from Allah, the Almighty, it becomes quite clear to others that this command is even more imperative for those who do not enjoy this infallibility.

All believers must seek the protection of Allah, their Owner and Lord, from the evil temptations of devils and that He should not leave them alone on their own. Not only must they not let themselves be tempted by evil suggestions, but also they must not take part in satanic gatherings and assemblies.

Thus, all those who want to follow the Truth must constantly avoid the satanic suggestions and always refuge in Him from this aspect.

2) One of the most effective ways of striving against obstinate and stubborn enemies is to reciprocate their evil with good. This may create an upheaval and revolution in their consciences and this matter causes the wrongdoers in many instances to end up being severely reproached and reprimanded, leading them to abandon their activities.

By studying the biographies of spiritual leaders and the practical method of the Prophet (S) and the immaculate Imams (as), we see that they used to reciprocate the worst offenses some persons committed against them with goodness and they showed kindness towards their oppressors.

This behaviour used to bring about a spiritual revolution and upheaval in the souls of their enemies and often led such wicked people back to the Path of Truth.

The Holy Qur’an reminds Muslims many times to keep this principle in mind when they find themselves

confronted by wrongs done against them and the result of this action is that the severe enemies may become a warm friend.

For example, in verse 34 of Sura Fussilat, No. 41, it says:

"...Repel (an evil deed) with that which is better, then will he between whom and you there was enmity become as though he were a bosom friend."

However, it must be noted that this command refers to those instances that the enemy does not exploit and misuse it, or counts it as a weakness and becomes bolder because of this command.

The meaning of this sentence also is not to yield to the temptations of the enemy. Perhaps because of this very reason, after giving this command in the above verses, the Prophet (S) is immediately ordered to take refuge in Allah from the temptations of Satans and their attendance.

1. Majma' ul-Bayan, The Commentary, Al-Mizan, The Commentary, Abul ul-Futuh, the Commentary, and ruh ul-Ma'ani
2. The great commentary of Fakhr Razi
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 552

Section 7: Afterlife

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 99-100

حَتَّي إِذَا جَآءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ

لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحاً فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلاَّ إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَآئِلُهَا وَمِن وَرَآئِهِم بَرْزَخٌ إِلَي يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

99. "Until, when death conies unto one of them, he says: 'My Lord! Send me back again, "
100. "That I might do righteousness in that which I have left behind!' Nay! It is but a (mere) word that he says; and, behind them, is a partition until the Day when they shall be raised up."

One day the deviant will awaken and ask to be returned to the world, but his request cannot be fulfilled.

The former verses spoke about the stubbornness of pagans and sinners in their wrong way. These verses depict the painful state of the unbelievers when they are on the threshold of death.

They continue their wrong way in the world until when death comes to them, as the verse says:

“Until, when death comes unto one of them…”

At the time when they are about to depart this world and enter the afterlife, the curtains of conceit and ignorance will be lifted from before their eyes and they will see the terrible fate ahead of them.

They will observe the lives they had led, the potentialities they had stifled, the duties they had neglected, and the dreadful consequences of the sins they had committed.

And at this time, such a person will cry out and:

“…he says: ‘My Lord! Send me back again, ”

Then, in the next verse, he continues saying:

“That I might do righteousness in that which I have left behind!’…”

But since the law of divine creation does not allow anyone, whether righteous or wrongdoer, to return, the answer to him will be:

“…Nay! It is but a (mere) word that he says…”

These are only words without thinking and sincerity. This is what many wrongdoers usually say when they are about to be punished and what every murderer says when his eyes fall upon the gallows, but when the impending disaster is removed, the guilty again continue along their previous paths.

This is similar to what we read in verse 28 of Sura Al–’An‘am, No. 6:

“…And even if they were returned they would revert to that which they were prohibited…”

Finally, the verse briefly and expressively refers to the mysterious intermediate world, the ‘Barzakh’, and says:

“…and, behind them, is a partition until the Day when they shall be raised up.”

Note

1) In the above verses, we read when the unbelievers are on the verge of death they will ask to be returned to the world, so that they can do good deeds in what they have left behind.

Some believe that the Qur’anic phrase, ‘fi ma taraktu’ (in that which I have left behind) here refers to the properties that are left behind from them as their legacy, which we usually call 'the estate of the deceased’.

There is a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), which corroborates this meaning.

He said:

“One who does not pay (even) the slightest amount of his alms-tax is neither a believer nor a Muslim, and the words of Allah, the Exalted, is (that he says):

‘…My Lord! Send me back again, that I might do righteousness in that which I have left behind …’.”[1]

While some other commentators maintain that it has a more extensive meaning. They say that the Qur’anic phrase /ma taraktu/ refers to all the good deeds that one has abandoned.

Therefore, the verse means that they would ask Allah to return them to the world, so that they can make amends for those good deeds that have not been accomplished. The tradition that we have mentioned above is not contrary to this vast and conclusive commentary.

Considering that these persons are repentant because of all the chances they have lost and they intend to make amends for all of them, the second comment seems to be more correct.

The word ‘la‘alla’ in the Qur’anic sentence /la‘alla ’a‘malu salihan/

(***“That I might do righteousness…”***)

probably indicates that these sinners are not absolutely sure about their future state. They know more or less that this newly found penitence and their being on the verge of death might have caused this regret but if they were returned, they might perhaps continue to behave the same way they had before.

2) The word /kalla/ is used in the Arabic language to indicate complete disagreement with the words of a speaker. It is, in fact, a word opposite to ‘yes’ which is used for acceptance. Some have said that the word ‘kalla’ indicates a categorical rejection of the claim of the sinners that they would do good if they were returned to the world.

Allah says:

“.. .It is but a (mere) word that he says”

(This is an unfounded claim. If they are sent to the world, they will continue to behave as they used to.)

It is also necessary to note that although this verse in a literal sense talks about the desire of the polymeists to return to the world, it is not limited to them at all. When wrongdoers and oppressors, on the brink of death, see their painful destinies, they become regretful about their past and ask to be sent back to the world to undo what they had done, but they are all refused.

3) What is the intermediate world? What kind of world is it? Where is it? How can it be proved that such a world exists between this world and the Hereafter? Must all people enter this world or is it only for a

special group of people to enter? Finally, what is the state and situation of believers, the righteous, the unbelievers, and the wrongdoers in the intermediate world?

These are the questions which exist in this field, and there are some hints to it in the verses of the Qur'an and the Islamic traditions, and it is necessary to answer them as much as possible.

The Arabic word 'barzakh' originally means that which stands between two things, later, whatever stood between any two affairs came to be called a 'barzakh'. As a consequence, the world that exists between this world and the Hereafter is called the barzakh and is also sometimes called 'the world of the grave' or 'the world of spirits'.

The reason for the existence of this world is based upon traditional proofs, and there are numerous Qur'anic verses that explicitly or implicitly refer to the barzakh.

The verse:

"...and behind them is a partition until the Day when they are raised up"

apparently indicates the existence of such a world. Some scholars say that the word 'barzakh' is a barrier that prevents human beings from returning to this world after they die, while the phrase:

"...until the day when they are raised up"

indicates that this barrier is between this world and the Day of Judgment and is not between human beings and the world.

Among the verses that explicitly show the existence of such a world are those that speak about the life of the martyrs; such as the one which says:

"And do not say of those, who are slain in the way of Allah, as dead. Nay, they are alive..."[2]

The Prophet (S) is addressed in this verse, but all the believers are addressed in verse 154 of Sura al-Baqarah, No. 2 which announces:

"And call not those who are slain in the way of Allah as "dead." Nay, they are living, only you perceive not."

The intermediate world not only exists for high-ranking believers such as the martyrs, but it also exists for the disobedient unbelievers such as Pharaoh and his associates.

The concept of 'Barzakh' is explicitly mentioned in verse 46 of Sura Al-Mu'min, No. 40 where it says:

"In front of the Fire they will be brought (***every***) ***morning and evening. And on the day when the Hour is established*** (***it will be said***)***: Cast the people of Pharaoh into the most awful***

chastisement."

There are other verses that relate to this subject but they are not as explicit and clear as the verses mentioned above. What is important to be noted is that apart from the verses mentioned, which treat of the barzakh in the general sense, other verses discuss it exclusively with respect to the destiny of particular groups such as the martyrs or the people of Pharaoh.

It is obvious, however, that neither the people of Pharaoh nor the martyrs are unique inhabitants of the barzakh for there are many people similar to them. For example, the Holy Qur'an counts a group of the righteous and the elect as sharing the same high rank as the martyrs.

In verse 69 of Sura An-Nisa', No. 4, the Holy Qur'an puts the Prophets, the Sincere and the Righteous in the same category:

"And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours, of the prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs and the righteous…"

At the end of this discussion we will refer to the generality of barzakh, Allah willing.

There are many narrations in authoritative Sunni and Shi'ah sources about the barzakh, but they speak of it differently: and illustrate the world between this world and the world Hereafter, which occurs in the grave, with some utterly different explanations.

1. There is a related tradition among the aphorisms of Imam 'Ali in part 130 of the Nahj-ul-Balaqah. It says that once Imam Ali (as) was returning from the Battle of Siffin and arrived at a cemetery outside the city of Kufah.

The Imam (as) turned towards the graves and said:

"O Inhabitants of terrible houses, empty places and dark graves! O People of the earth! O Strangers! O you in Solitude! O you who are Terrified! You preceded us in going this way and we will join you.

If you ask us about the news of this world, we will tell you that others occupy your homes, others have married your wives, and your possessions have been distributed. These are some of the news we have, what news do you have?"

Then Imam Ali (as) addressed his companions and said:

"If they were given permission to speak, they would certainly have told you that the best supplies for this journey are piety and God-wariness."

It is obvious that all these words cannot be interpreted as allusions and metaphors. They all reveal the fact that when a human being dies, that person will experience a type of life in the intermediate world where he will be able to understand and think and if he were given permission to speak, he would do so.

2. There is another tradition narrated by 'Asbaq ibn Nabatah about Imam Ali (as):

One day Imam Ali left Kufah and arrived a place called Qaryy (Najaf) on his journey. 'Asbaq says that when they reached him (as) they saw the Imam lying on the ground.

Qanbar said:

"Would you like me to spread my cloak under your feet, O'Amir ul-Mu'mineen?"

He said:

"No, it is a place that has the soils of the believers (i.e., believers are buried in this place). You will bother them by your action."

'Asbaq said:

"I understand what you mean by the soils of the believers, but what does bothering them mean?"

He said:

"O son of Nabatah, if the curtains are pulled back from in front of your eyes, you will see the souls of believers sitting in circles, visiting each other and conversing. This is where the believers are, and Barahut[3] is where the souls of unbelievers reside."[4]

3. Imam Ali ibn al-Hussayn (as) said:

"The grave is either one of the gardens of Paradise or one of the pits of Hell."[5]

4. Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The barzakh (the intermediate world) is the grave itself, which is the punishment and the reward given between this world and the Hereafter. We swear by Allah that we only fear of the intermediate world for you!"[6]

5. There is a tradition in the book of al-Kafi which says that after mentioning the verse, the narrator asked the Imam:

"What is the 'barzakh' (the intermediate world)?"

The Imam said:

"The grave which spans the period from death until the Day of Resurrection."[7]

6. There is another tradition from Imam Sadiq (as). It says that one day a man came to him and said:

"It is said that the souls of believers after death will enter the chests of green birds that fly around Divine

Throne."

The Imam said:

"No, that is not the case. The believer is more respectable in the eyes of Allah than to be confined within the chest of a bird. The souls of believers are rather clothed in bodies like their own bodies."[8]

This tradition refers to a substantial body that is somehow like this material body here, but it is as immaterial as the intermediate world.

7. There is another tradition cited in the book of Al-Kafi attributed to Imam Sadiq (as): The Imam was asked about the souls of believers.

He answered:

"They are in the chambers of Paradise, they eat the foods of Paradise and drink its drinks. And they say: 'O' Allah! Establish the Day of Resurrection and make the promises You have made to us come to pass.'"[9]

8. There is another tradition by the Imam in the same book where he says that when a believer passes away, the souls of other believers will gather around him and ask him about those who were in the world and whether they were alive or dead.

If he says that such and such a person had died but they do not see him among themselves, they will say that that person had certainly fallen (i.e. he has gone into Hell).[10]

Certainly, Paradise and Hell in the narrations mentioned above mean paradisaical or hellish states in the intermediate world, not those after the Day of Judgment, for they are very different from each other.

There are many narrations about the subject of the barzakh compiled under different categories and headings.

Some of them are as follows:

Many narrations that speak of the pressure and punishment of the grave and the questions put to its inhabitants.

Narrations about the contact of the souls of the dead with their families and observing the conditions they are in.

Some narrations mention of the incidents that had occurred to the Prophet on the night of his ascension, and his meeting with the souls of prophets and messengers.

Narrations that say the results of man's good and evil deeds will be manifest after he dies.[11]

Barzakh and Contact with the World of Spirits

Although many people who claim they communicate with the world of souls are either liars or deluded, researches now show that it is possible to communicate with the world of spirits. Some experts have investigated and experimented this phenomenon and have become aware that there is some truth in the claim that it is possible, thus proving that the world of intermediate exists.

This fact itself is a clear evidence upon the existence of the intermediate world and that it is a reality. It shows that after this world and the death of the body, and before the appearance of Hereafter, there exists another world.

Further Clarification of the Barzakh

Aside from details, and with few exceptions, there is broad consensus among Shi'ah and Sunni scholars of Islam, with some insignificant exceptions, concerning the barzakh and the punishments and rewards found there.

The reason for this agreement is obvious, for The Holy Qur'an explicitly mentions the existence of the world of barzakh and its punishments and blessings.

Concerning the martyrs, the Holy Qur'an says:

"Do not think of those who were killed in the way of Allah to be dead. Nay, they are alive, being provided sustenance with their Lord."

"They are happy with what Allah has given them out of His grace, and rejoicing for those who have not yet joined them from behind them, no fear come shall be upon them nor shall they grieve."[12]

Not only is this group of believers blessed and rewarded there, but the worst of the wrongdoers and the disobedient are punished there as well, such as the people of Pharaoh as mentioned before.[13]

There are numerous reliable traditions from many sources with well-established chains of transmissions that confirm the existence of the barzakh. Therefore, the principle that the barzakh exists is without question an element of Islamic belief. The important matter is that we want to know how the life of the barzakh is.

We have different expressive illustrations, mentioned here, concerning life in the barzakh. One of them is that when a human being dies, his soul will be placed in a subtle body. This body is completely unlike the corporeal body for it is not subject to the accidents that affect the physical body in the world of matter.

Since this subtle body is in every other aspect like the worldly body, it is idiomatically called an atom-like

body or form. It is neither completely non-material nor is it completely material, but it participates in a kind of immateriality of the intermediate world.

Some scholars have likened the state of the soul in the barzakh to the state of the soul when a human being is asleep. In the state of sleep, the soul may really experience pleasure and pain in an even sharper way than when in the physical state.

It can enjoy a pleasure so much or can get so upset by a painful experience that their effects can sometimes be seen on the body itself, the body will smile, cry, jerk in surprise or writhe in pain.

Some even believe that at the time of sleep, the soul really acts in the atom-like body and, more importantly, some believe that those who have powerful souls, when they are not asleep, can also be in the state of non-materiality of the intermediate world while being conscious.

This means that they can leave the body and travel in this atom-like body and be aware of their surroundings and their state and consciously witness events.[14]

Some even specify that an atom-like form exists in every human body, but when a person is going to die and begins the life of the intermediate world, the atom-like form leaves the body; and sometime, as we said, it is possible that in this very material life in this world, too, it separates from the body.

If, now, we do not accept these characteristics of the atom-like body, the main principle cannot be denied, i.e., the reality of the barzakh, for it is rationally possible and it is referred to in many narrations as well.

Thus, basing on what was said, the answer to this objection became clear that some critics say that the belief in the existence of the atom-like body would necessitate belief in metempsychosis, we assert that reincarnation is nothing but the transference of one soul into different bodies.

The Late Shaykh Baha'i, an Islamic scholar, in response to this criticism said very clearly that the reincarnation that all Muslims unanimously reject is the rebirth of the soul in another body in this world after the destruction of one's body.

But the soul's inhabitance of an atom-like body in the world of barzakh until the Day of Resurrection when it returns to the first body by Allah's commandment is by no means a reincarnation.

The belief in reincarnation requires the belief that the soul is pre eternal and eternally migrates from one body to another and seriously denies the resurrection of the body, and because it denies a fundamental tenet of faith, Muslims, who believe in eternality of souls and that they constantly transfer from one body to another, are considered outside the religion of Islam.[15]

Moreover, if, as some say, the atom-like body is in fact itself in the inner side of this very material (physical) body, the answer to the issue of reincarnation will become more obvious, for the soul would

not leave its own form or body and enter another, however it could leave some of its forms and continue living in the intermediate world in another form.

Another issue that is brought up by reading some verses of the Holy Qur'an is that there is a group of people that does not live in the intermediate world. Verses 55 and 56 of Sura Al-Rum say:

"And on the day when the Hour will be established, the guilty will swear that they did not remain but for an hour thus were they used to being deluded. But those to whom knowledge and faith are given will say: Indeed, you have tarried, by Allah's decree, until the Day of Resurrection. This is the Day of Resurrection, but you were not aware."

There are many narrations that answer this issue. They divide mankind into: real believers, real unbelievers, and those who are weak and mediocre in their belief and practice. The intermediate world is only for the first two groups, but the third group passes the barzakh in a state of ignorance and unconsciousness.[16]

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 101

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَآ أَنسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَآءَلُونَ

101. "And when the Trumpet is blown there will be no relationship between them that day, nor will they ask of one another."

In the previous verses, the statement was upon the barzakh, and now this verse talks about the Day of Resurrection and a part of the state of the wrongdoers in that world.

It says:

"And when the Trumpet is blown there will be no relationship between them that day, nor will they ask of one another."

According to the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the Trumpet will be blown twice. The first blast heralds the death of the universe. After this blast everyone on the earth and in the heavens will die and death will descend over the universe.

The second blast of the Trumpet heralds the resurrection from the dead and all the human beings will return to a new life and mankind will begin to be assembled for the Great Reckoning.

The blowing of the trumpet is meant for every trumpet but here it has a special meaning and interpretation, and we will turn to it, Allah willing, in the commentary on verse 68 of Sura Az-Zumar.

The two aspects of the Day of Resurrection are mentioned in this verse. One aspect is that the ties of

kinship and parentage are no longer effective.

Family relationships, in this world, are very important as a natural resource for help in solving various problems, and many sinful persons may escape of a lot of punishments by means of their tribal relationships.

But, on the Day of Resurrection, this avenue for help will be closed and similarly relationships with powerful families in society would be of no advantage to anyone.

People here usually ask their kin for help for solving their problems, while on the Day of Resurrection a person’s only companion and friend would be his deeds, and no one, not even that person's brother, offspring or parent will be able to defend him or negate his punishment.

The second aspect is that, indeed, they will be too terrified by the Divine Reckoning and punishment to ask anything of each other.

The Day of Resurrection will be a day when a mother would ignore her suckling child, when brother will forget his brother, and when people will be seemed as if they were drunk in bewilderment but they are not drank.

It is a time when Allah’s chastisement would be severe, as we read in the beginning of the Sura Al-Hajj:

“O Mankind! Be in awe of your Lord! Verily the earthquake of the Hour** (**of doom**) **is a grievous thing. On the Day you shall behold it, every suckling mother shall forsake her suckling babe, and every pregnant woman shall lay down her burden, and you shall see the people** (**as**) **intoxicated, yet they are not intoxicated, but the chastisement of Allah is severe.” [17]

There is also another probable interpretation for the Qur’anic sentence /wa la yatasa’alun/:

(***“…nor will they ask of one another.”***)

that the purpose is that they will not ask each other for help, for they know that this request is not of any use. Some commentators have also said that the verse means that they will not ask each other about their lineage and parentage also and this has been emphasized on the preceding phrase: /fa la ’ansaba baynahum/

(***“…, there will be no relationship between them…”***)

The first commentary seems more probable although there is no contradiction and conflict between them for it is possible that the above sentence could refer to all of these meanings.

Question

In other verses of the Qur’an, we read that people have different questions to ask of each other, for

example in this verse:

"And some of them draw near unto others, mutually questioning."[18]

Or, the inhabitants of Paradise will ask the inhabitants of Hell:

"What has brought you to this burning?"[19]

But why does this holy verse say,

"...nor will they ask of one another"?

Answer

These two matters do not contradict each other. The first instance of questioning mentioned above concerns the situation after Reckoning and it concerns the people of Paradise questioning the people of Hell.

But the verse in question:

(***"...nor will they ask of one another."***)

concerns the onset of the Day of Resurrection and the phase before people are sent to Paradise or Hell.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 102-103

فَمَن ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ

102. "Then whoever' s scale be heavy, those are they who shall be prosperous."
103. "And whoever's scale be light, those are they who have ruined their souls, in Hell will they abide."

For every task there is a measure.

On Judgment Day, the first event is the evaluation of deeds according to a special measure which has been appointed for it. A group of people have some noble and righteous actions which will weigh heavy on that measure and they will be successful.

The verse says:

“Then whoever’s scale be heavy, those are they who shall be prosperous.”

The Arabic word /mawazin/ is the plural form of the word /mizan/ meaning ‘a scale’. The concept of a scale is not meant here an ordinary scale and the like of it, used for measuring the things, and also it is not restricted to just the common means whereby physical quantities are measured, but includes non–material objects as well.

In other words, ‘scale’ has a vast meaning here which envelops all means of measurement. According to different narrations, the scales or criteria for measuring human beings, the actions of human and even humans themselves, are the great leaders and ideal human beings.

There is a tradition that says:

“Amir ul–Mu’mineen Ali (*as*) *and the Imams among his descendants are the scales of measure.”*[20]

Thus, human beings and their deeds will be compared with the great prophets and their legatees. This comparison will make it clear to what extent they are on par with each other.

In this way good deeds and people can be distinguished from their bad deeds and good deeds worthy and unworthy, and heavy from light. The application of the word mawazin, which is in the plural form, is also made clear. The secret of this is that the great leaders who are the criteria of this measuring are numerous.

Another possibility is that all of the prophets, Imams and the elect of Allah were models and ideals in one or many different respects according to the conditions of their lives. Each one of them represented a shining example of one particular quality or other and will be the criterion by which that quality or deed will be measured in others.

The next verse implies that those whose scale of their deeds is light, because of lacking faith and righteous deeds, are the ones who have lost the capital of their own selves and are the real losers, because they will abide in Hell forever.

The verse says:

“And whoever's scale be light, those are they who have ruined their souls, in Hell will they abide.”

The use of the sentence ‘khasiru’anfusahum’

(***“…those who have lost their souls”***)

in the verse is a subtle reference to the fact that they have lost their greatest capital, that is, their existence in the marketplace of this world and did not obtain anything valuable for it.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 104-105

تَلْفَحُ وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ وَهُمْ فِيهَا كَالِحُونَ

أَلَمْ تَكُنْ ءَايَاتِي تُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنتُم بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ

***104. "The Fire will burn their faces, and they are glum therein** (**with the.ir lips displaced**)."*
105. "** (**They will be told:**) **Were not My Signs recited to you, then you used to belie them?"

The fire burns the faces of the inhabitants of the Hell continuously and without any respite.21

The unbelievers suffer both physically

(***"The Fire will burn their faces..."***)

and spiritually in their painful punishment and the verse mentions a part of them.

It says:

***"The Fire will burn their faces, and they are glum therein** (**with their lips displaced**)."*

The Qur'anic word /talfahu/ is derived from the word 'lafh' and originally means the blow of a sword. Since the effect of a flame or the intense light of the sun, when they hit the human face, is like that of a sword, so this word is used as an allusion to this meaning.

The word /kalih'/ is derived from the word /kuluh/ means to become grim-faced or to grimace. Many commentators have interpreted the word in this way, because when the skin of the face feels the heat of fire, it becomes contorted in such a way that the lips would remain open.

We have already mentioned that the Divine punishment in the Hereafter, and even in this world, proportionately reflects the sins committed. It is not such that any kind of punishment would be inflicted upon any kind of wrongdoer.

In this verse, the burning inflicted upon faces by the flames of Hell will be so severe that these faces will be contorted and their lips will peel back as a punishment for those whose scales are light and are unbelievers.

When we reflect that most of them are those who had sneered derisively when they heard the Divine verses recited to them and who sometimes smiled in mockery at them, the proportionality of this punishment to their deeds becomes evident.

Those who are righteous and love Allah are vastly different to those whose balance is light. They have always shed tears and supplicated to Him (s.w.t.) as if they were people who had committed great sins.

The following narration provides an excellent insight into such a noble personality:

'Isma'i said:

"One moonlit night I was in Mecca. When I was circumambulating the Sacred House, a sad yet beautiful voice gently touched my ears. I looked for the person who possessed the voice and my eyes fell upon a tall, handsome youth whose face showed the signs of goodness.

With the curtain of the Sacred House in his hand, he was supplicating to Allah in the following way:

"O' my Master and my Lord! The eyes of Your servants are now closed by sleep and the stars of the sky (one by one) are going toward the west, (so the eyes can no longer perceive them). You, Allah, the Alive, the Eternal, neither slumber nor does sleep overtake You.

Now at this time, in the depths of the night, kings have the gates of their palaces closed and have assigned guardians to watch them, and friends are visiting each other in privacy.The only door opened to the supplicants is the door of Your House.

Now I have come, a wrongdoer and needful, to the door of Your House. I have come hoping that You, The Merciful, will shower me with blessings. O The Generous, I have come begging Your grace."

Then the young man started reciting these lines of poetry:

O The One Who, in the darkness of the night, answers the prayers of those who are driven by necessities.

O The One Who removes and obliterates pains, disasters and sufferings.

Your guests are sleeping around Your House and will get up,

But Your eyes of generosity will never ever be overcome by sleep,

O The Eternal! If Your generosity and benevolence were only desired by the honorable ones around Your Throne,

Then to whose house must wrongdoers go and whose forgiveness should they desire?"

Then he turned his head toward the heavens and continued:

"My Lord, my Master! If I have worshipped You out of knowledge and awareness, praise will be to You and I am indebted to Your grace. And if I have committed sins out of ignorance, You have presented Your argument to me without any shortcomings..."

Then he again turned his head toward the heavens and said in a loud voice:

“O my Master and my Lord! Impure is the world in which there is no remembrance of You. Without Your pardon, the Hereafter is not pleasant. Without worshipping You, the days of life have no value. Impure are those hearts that show no affection for You. Blessings are unpleasant if there is none of Your forgiveness...”

’Isma‘i said:

“The young man continued and recited some more astonishing and interesting poems in this content and he continued supplication until he fainted and fell on the ground.I went up to him and stared at his face.

I looked at him carefully and I recognized him, he was Hadrat Zayn ul–‘Aabidin, Ali ibn al–Hussein, Imam Sajjad (as). I put his head on my lap and wept uncontrollably for his condition. One of my teardrops fell on his face and he opened his eyes and said:

‘Who is it that has distracted me from remembering my Lord?’”

I said:

“My master, it is me, ’Isma‘i. Why do you cry so much and why are you so restless? You are from the household of the Prophet (S). Has not the verse of purification been sent down concerning you?

Has not Allah said about you:

‘...Allah’s wish is but to remove uncleanness far from you, O People of the Household, and to purify you with a thorough purification’?[22]

The Imam sat up and said:

“O ’Isma‘i! How far! How far! Allah has created Paradise for those who obey Him, even if that person is an Ethiopian slave. He has also created Hell for those who disobey Him, even if that person is one of the nobles of the tribe of Quraysh. Have not you read the Holy Qur’an and have not you heard this verse:

‘And when the Trumpet is blown there will be no relationship between them that day, nor will they ask of one another’.”[23]

’Isma‘i said:

“When I saw that this was the case, I went away and left him alone.”[24]

Some Traditions

1. The Prophet (S) said:

“Two (kinds of) eyes are saved from the Fire of Hell: one eye that weeps inside the night out of fear of Allah, and another that does not sleep in the way of Allah.”[25]

2. The Prophet (S) said:

“One who sheds tears out of fear of Allah will not be burnt by the Fire as milked milk does not return to the udder.”[26]

3. Zayd ibn Suhan asked Imam Ali (as):

“Who is the best of people in the sight of Allah?

The Imam said:

“Whoever fears Allah and is acquainted with piety and austerity more than others and behaves abstinently more than others do.”[27]

4. The Prophet (S) said:

“He who is the best among mankind in the sight of Allah is the one who fears Allah the most.”[28]

5. Imam Ali (as) said:

“When Allah gathers all of mankind together (in the gathering-place), a crier will speak in a loud voice among them:

’O‘ mankind! Today he is the favorite of Allah who had feared Allah the most.’”[29]

6. Imam Ali ibn al-Hussayn (as) said:

“The top and source of any knowledge is the fear of Allah.”[30]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

“If you fear Allah as He deserves to be feared of, you will obtain a kind of knowledge where every thing will become clear to you and you will no longer be ignorant, and if you know Allah as He deserves to be known, you can move mountains by your prayers.”[31]

8. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“It is suitable for the believer to fear Allah to such an extent that it would be as if he were about to fall into Hell, and trust Allah to such an extent as if he were one of the people of Paradise.”

The next verse mentions part of Allah’s conversation with the unbelievers and He, addressing them scornfully, inquire them, as the verse says:

“ (They will be told:) Were not My Signs recited to you, then you used to belie them?”

It implies that even though Allah sent them enough signs and reasons through His prophets and gave them a strong argument they continued in their denial and rejection.

With regard to the Arabic verbs /tutla/, translated here as ‘recited’ and ‘tukazzibun/, translated here as ‘you used to belie’, both of which are in the future tense in the Arabic text, it makes the fact clear that the Divine verses were recited to them continually and they also continually denied them.

Surah al-Mu’minun – Verses 106-108

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا وَكُنَّا قَوْماً ضَآلِّينَ

رَبَّنَآ أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَإِنْ عُدْنَا فَإِنَّا ظَالِمُونَ

قَالَ اخْسَئُوا فِيهَا وَلاَ تُكَلِّمُونِ

106. “They will say: ‘Our Lord! Our adversity conquered us, and we were a people gone astray.”
107. “Our Lord! bring us forth out of it! Then if we return (to evil) then verily we shall be unjust.”
108. “He will say: ‘Be you driven into it, and speak not to Me.”

Consciences of men will be awakened on the Resurrection Day and wrongdoers will confess their sins, but they will be humiliated and Allah will speak to them in the harsh terms.

It was mentioned in the previous verse that Allah would address them with reproach:

“Were not My Signs recited to you, then you used to belie them?”

In this verse they will confess it and as the verse says:

“They will say: ‘Our Lord! Our adversity conquered us, and we were a people gone astray.”

The Arabic word /šiqwah/ and /šiqawat/ (misfortune) is the opposite of felicity and means the trouble, punishment and calamity prepared for a person. In other words, the wrongdoer will be overwhelmed by evils and disasters, while felicity, on the other hand, means the blessings and goodness in store for the person who does good.

In both cases, adversity and felicity, are only the consequences of our intentions, words, and deeds. The belief that felicity and adversity are realities in themselves with which someone is born is only a product of our imagination which goes against the call of all apostles and the efforts of all the great divine guides

and teachers of mankind.

It is an idea proffered for those who want to avoid their responsibilities and a means whereby they can justify their evil actions or justify their ignorance.

The Hellish wrongdoers in the core of their being indeed confess that they are aware of Allah’s ultimatum and that they were an erring people, but they themselves had prepared the ground for their misfortune.

In the next verse, they try to use their confession to attract Allah’s blessings, so they immediately say implying that He would return them back to the world so that they do righteous deeds and that if they commit wrong again they are oppressors.

The verse says:

“Our Lord! bring us forth out of it! Then if we return (to evil) then verily we shall be unjust.”

They make this request as if they were not aware of the fact that the Hereafter was a place where they would be confronted by the results of their wrongdoings. Because they would not be able to return to the world, they could no longer act in it and thus they could not rectify their sinful deeds.

Thus in the third verse, Allah gives them a firm answer, this verse says:

“He will say: ‘Be you driven into it, and speak not to Me.”

The Arabic phrase /ikhsa’u/ (Be you driven into it) is an imperative verb meaning ‘go away.’ It is usually used to chase away a dog, and when it is told to a human being, it indicates the person’s disgrace and that he deserves punishment.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verses 109-110

إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْ عِبَادِي يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَآ ءَامَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُمْ سِخْرِيّاً حَتَّي أَنسَوْكُمْ ذِكْرِي وَكُنتُم مِنْهُمْ تَضْحَكُونَ

109. “Verily there was a party among My servants who used to say: ‘Our Lord! We believe, therefore forgive us and have mercy on us for You are the Best of the mercifulness;”
110. “But you took them with ridicule, until they made you forget My remembrance and you were laughing at them!”

Faith is the beginning of forgiveness, and forgiveness is the beginning of Allah’s mercy. The servants of Allah are always concerned about their shortcomings and ask for Divine pardon.

The verse says:

"Verily there was a party among My servants who used to say: 'Our Lord! We believe, therefore forgive us and have mercy on us for You are the Best of the mercifulness;"

In the next verse, Allah says:

"But you took them with ridicule, until they made you forget My remembrance and you were laughing at them!"

In other words, you used to laugh at them and scorn them and their words, beliefs and behaviour.

Meanwhile it should be noted that there is a great difference between the Arabic words 'sukhriyan' (to take for a mockery) and 'sikhriyan' (to, put others under subjection andservice).

If the relations between members of society were based on sympathy, cooperation and mutual assistance, and they benefited from each other's skills, arts and labour, then society would develop, become stronger and most of its problems would be solved.

This concept is stated in the verse saying:

"...that some of them may take labour from others..."[32]

But if social relations are mainly based upon humiliation, disenfranchisement, discrimination and hopelessness, such a society will forget Allah (s.w.t.) and decline.

The verse under discussion indicates this concept by saying:

"But you took them with ridicule..."

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 111

إِنّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُونَ

111. "Verily I have recompensed them this day for they were patient and steadfast, (that) they are indeed the triumphant."

The Arabic word /fauz/ means to achieve an aim.

Allah Himself will reward those who are patient. In this holy verse He therefore implies that, on the Day of Judgment, those who were patient before the unbelievers' ridicules and were steadfast in their divine programs will receive rewards from the side of Allah and will be prosperous.

The verse says:

"Verily I have recompensed them this day for they were patient and steadfast, (that) they are indeed the triumphant."

But on that very Day, the situation of the wrongdoers will be different. They will be in the worst condition they had ever experienced, suffering the most painful punishments with no one to help them, and they will always be in this condition because they deserve it.

Thus, in the recent four verses mentioned, the Qur'an clearly shows us the main causes for the suffering of the dwellers of Hell and the felicity of the dwellers of Paradise.

The people of Hell prepared the causes of their suffering themselves by mocking the people of Truth and ridiculing their pure beliefs. Yes, those who despised the believers in the world should suffer the worst despising.

The people of Paradise, however, achieved a greater victory in the sight of Allah, for they endured with exemplary patience the arrogance, complacency and irrationality of their enemies and held themselves on the path of "Allah".

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 112-114

قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي الاَرْضِ عَدَدَ سِنِينَ

قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْماً أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ فَسْأَلِ الْعَآدِّينَ

قَالَ إِن لَبِثْتُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

112. "He will say: 'How many years did you tarry in the earth?'"
113. "They will say: 'We tarried but a day or part of a day; but ask those who keep account'."
114. "He will say: 'You tarried but a little if you had only known'."

It is very unfortunate that most of mankind buy Hell and eternal punishment in exchange for the fleeting pleasures and comforts of this world.

In view of the fact that previous verses referred to a part of the painful chastisement of the, people of Hell, these verses talk about their other kinds of mental punishments in the form of a Divine reproach.

At first, it says:

“He will say: ‘How many years did you tarry in the earth?’”

The Arabic word /ard/ used in these verses shows that the purpose of this question is to compare the duration they had lived in this world with the higher reality of duration in the Hereafter.

This view would render unlikely the opinion of some commentators that the question refers to the duration of their stay in the intermediate world, although there is some little evidence for this notion in other verses.

An entire lifetime in this transient world would amount to no more than a day, or a part of a day, when compared to the eternality of the rewards and punishments in the Hereafter:

“They will say: 'We tarried but a day or part of a day…”

In fact, the long life-times in this world comparing the life in Hereafter, where not only the blessings of it are eternal but also the punishments of it are infinite, seem as some fleeting moments.

Then, as an emphasis on their own saying, or in order to deliver a more accurate answer, they say:

“…but ask those who keep account’.”

Perhaps, the purpose of ‘those who keep account’ is the same angels that carefully count and record every instant of our lives and the deeds done in them, because they know the account of these things better than others.

To affirm the new sense of time they are experiencing and to reproach them, the Qur’an says:

“He will say: ‘You tarried but a little if you had only known’.”

On the Day of Resurrection, indeed, they will be aware that life in the world in comparison to life in the Hereafter lasts only a day or less, but when they were in this world their hearts and minds were sealed with negligence and arrogance so they behaved as if the world was eternal and considered the Hereafter as a figment of the imagination and an empty promise.

That is why the Qur’an implies that if they had known this reality that they understood in Hereafter, they would have recognized it in the world.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verse 115

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثاً وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لاَ تُرْجَعُونَ

115. “What! Do you then think that We created you aimlessly and that you shall not be returned to Us?”

Allah does nothing in vain and created man for a purpose. Without the Hereafter, the life of the world would be useless, and therefore the aim of the creation of man is not peculiar to or limited for this world. This verse thus reflects this truth and becomes a very effective and instructive means to awaken those who are centered upon this world alone.

It says:

"What! Do you then think that We created you aimlessly and that you shall not be returned to Us?"

This short, meaningful sentence gives a compelling reason for the reality of the Day of Judgment and the existence of Reckoning; which is that if the Day of Judgment were not a reality this worldly life would remain without purpose.

This life has many difficulties and hazards which Allah has prepared as preliminaries and conditions for the life to come. If this short life on the earth was all there had been, all our sufferings and struggles here would have been meaningless and vain. We will discuss this subject in greater detail later.

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned some of the purposes for the creation of man:

1. Worship:

"I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me."

(And through this means they might become perfect and close to Allah).33

2. Trials:

"Who has created life and death that He may try you, which of you is best in conduct..."34

3. Receiving Divine Mercy:

"Except those on whom your Lord has mercy; and for that (mercy) did He create them .. ."35

Imam Ali (as) said:

"May Allah have mercy on him who is aware of his value."

(And knows from what place he has come, where he is now, and where he will go to).36

Imam Hussayn (as) said:

*"Allah has not created his servants but to know Him, then when they knew Him they would worship Him, and when they worshipped Him they would no longer need to worship others."*37

Imam Ali (as) said:

“The world is created for something else not for its own sake.”[38]

(This world is a means to achieve the Hereafter).

Surly those who seek all of their goals in this world will become world-oriented and cling to the earth, as verse 176 of Sura Al-’A‘raf says:

“...but he clung to the earth...”

There is a poem that says:

Every moment of this valuable life is a peerless treasure,
Oh, every moment we lose such a treasure.

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verse 116

فَتَعَالَي اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ

116. “Therefore, high exalted is Allah, the King of the Truth! There is no god but He, the Lord of ‘Arsh (the Throne) of Grace.”

Sovereignty belongs only to Allah.

(***“...the King of the Truth...”***)

The entire universe is under His Divine lordship and administration.

Thus, this verse says:

“Therefore, high exalted is Allah, the King of the Truth! There is no god but He, the Lord of ’Arsh (the Throne) of Grace.”

(He is above creating the universe in vain). One who does something in vain is ignorant, weak and powerless or is a vain and false entity in his essence. It is therefore impossible for Allah, the Ruler of the universe, Who is absolutely perfect, Who is the Truth and issues nothing save the Truth, to create something in vain and aimless.

If it is imagined that someone might be able to prevent Him from achieving His aim, by the sentence

“...There is no god but He...”

The Qur’an nullifies this idea.

Moreover, by emphasizing the divinity of Allah through the holy phrase:

"...the Lord of 'Arsh (the Throne) of Grace",

it indicates His Ownership from the point of view of His capacity as One Who rectifies, and more clearly shows the purposefulness of the universe.

In short, in addition to mentioning the word 'Allah', which itself generally refers to His all attributes of perfection, the verse specifies four of His attributes: His ownership and sovereignty, the truthfulness of His essence, the non existence of any partners with Him, and His lordship.

All of these attributes indicate that He never does anything in vain and He has not created man and the world for no end.

As already mentioned, the Arabic word /'arsh/ refers to the entire world of existence which, in fact, is under Allah's sovereignty, (because 'Arsh philologically means: Throne with long legs and the Throne of the rulers, and this is an implicit declaration to Allah's sovereignty).

This can be clearly seen in the verse that says:

"...then He mounted the Throne (of authority)..."[39]

which alludes to Allah's command of the heavens and the earth after He had created them. In other words, not only is Allah the Creator, but He is also the Sovereign and Manager of the world.

The Qur'anic word /'arsh/ is qualified by the adjective /karim/ (of Grace), this is because the word 'karim', in Arabic, originally means honorable, beneficial, and good. Since Allah's Throne has all these attributes, the adjective 'karim' has been used.

It should be noted that the attribute of 'karim' is not used only for an entity that possesses wisdom such as man or Allah, but in the Arabic language it is used for many other things, too.

Verse 50 of Sura Al-Hajj concerning the righteous believers says:

"...for them is forgiveness and an honourable (karim) provision;"

In Mufradat, Raqib says that this adjective is not used for small and trifle kindnesses, it is rather used in cases where these kindnesses are very important.

We would finally like to draw your attention to this matter: The study of the order and system of this world is one of the reasons used in the discussion of the Resurrection to confirm the existence of another world. In other words, the study upon this 'first creation' testifies that there is 'later creation' after it.[40]

Now it becomes necessary to explain further: We know that the world of creation is very ordered, vast, glorious and miraculous. Its ysteries are so numerous that great scientists confess that all of the knowledge of mankind compared to it is like a single page of a great book.

Each galaxy of this world comprises millions of stars. The number of galaxies and the distances between them are so astoundingly immense that even when we calculate them using the speed of light which travels at the speed of 300, 000 km per second they seem terrible.

The order and accuracy found in the structure of the smallest unit of this world is the same order found in the structures of its greatest units.

As far as we know, man is the most complete and the most sublime being in this material universe. At the same time, we know that with all his sublimity and lofty reputation, man is confronted many difficulties and miseries in his short lifetime.

He has still barely graduated from his infancy with all its difficulties and problems when he comes up against his tumultuous youth with all its social and psychological storms. And not yet does he gain a foothold in adolescence when old age knocks at the door of his life with all its concomitant miseries.

Is it possible to believe that the purpose of this great system and man, this miracle of creation, is just to exist for a short time, passing these three periods of life with difficulty, eating a little food, wearing clothes, sleeping and waking up, and men passing away into nothingness?

If this were really the case would not creation be vain and useless? Would any wise being create this great system for such a small aim?

Suppose that humankind tarried in this world for millions of years and generations came and went one by one, and the material sciences advanced so much that man could avail himself to the best nutrition, garments and dwellings, would eating, drinking, dressing and sleeping be so valuable that they would be the sole purpose of his institutions and systems?

Thus, the study of this great world merely indicates that this life is an introduction to a greater, vaster, and eternal world. It is only the existence of such a world that makes our lives meaningful and purposeful.

Consequently, it is not strange that the materialistic philosophers, who do not believe in the Resurrection and the Hereafter, count this world as vain and aimless. In fact, if we did not believe in such a world, we would concur with them. This is why we say if death .were the end of everything, the creation of the world would be vain and purposeless.

We read in Sura Al-Waqi‘ah, No. 56, verse 62:

“And verily you know the first creation. Why, then, do you not take admonition?”

Surah al-Mu’minun - Verses 117-118

وَمَن يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهاً ءَاخَرَ لاَ بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ فإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُ عِندَ رَبِّهِ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ

وَقُل رَّبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

117. “And whoever invokes with Allah another god, he has no proof there of; therefore his reckoning is only with his Lord. Verily, the disbelievers will not prosper.”
118. “And (***O Muhammad***) ***say: ‘My Lord! Forgive and have mercy,*** (***for***) ***You are the best of the merciful ones’.”***

Polytheism, in whatever form it appears, is condemned. Man’s belief and conduct must be based on intellect and logical proof A pagan or polytheist has not any logic.

(***… he has no proof…***)

The previous verses emphasized the Day of Resurrection and Allah’s attributes. The above noble verse emphasizes monotheism and negates any kind of polytheism. Thus, it has completed the discussion up on the origin and the Resurrection.

It says:

“And whoever invokes with Allah another god, he has no proof there of; therefore his reckoning is only with his Lord…”

Indeed, polytheists only rely upon hollow claims and the reasons they advance for their beliefs include such things as the blind imitation of ancestors and various unfounded superstitions.

They deny the Day of Resurrection which is based upon very clear arguments and evidence while they accept polytheism which has not been founded upon similar sound reasoning and evidence.

Allah will certainly hold to account those who do not obey the command of reason, and consciously enter the deviated ways of unbelief. The verse ends with the sentence implying that the disbelievers will not be successful, and the consequence of their behaviour will be made clear in this Divine Reckoning.

The verse says:

“…verily, the disbelievers will not prosper.”

It is interesting that this Sura begins with the sentence:

“Successful indeed are the believers.”

and ends its discourse with the sentence:

“…verily the disbelievers will not prosper.”

This, in summary, is the Qur’anic perspective on the life of the believers and unbelievers.

In the last verse of this Sura, the Prophet (S) is addressed and as a general conclusion it says:

“And (O Muhammad) say: ‘My Lord! Forgive and have mercy, (for) You are the best of the merciful ones’.”

The verse implies that some people are wandering on the path of polytheism and some are committing oppression and tyranny, the Prophet should rely on Allah’s grace and favour and ask His pardon and forgiveness.

It is certain that this is a command for all the believers although the verse is ostensibly addressed to the holy Prophet (S).

A narration says that the verses of the beginning and the end of this Sura are among the treasures of Allah’s Throne, and that anyone who puts the first three holy verses of this Sura into practice and learns advice from its last four verses will be successful.[41]

It is likely that the first three verses of this Sura are the first three verses that come after the sentence

“Successful indeed are the believers.”

One of them invites the believers to humility in the ritual prayer, the second invites them to refrain from what is vain and useless, and the third exhorts them to pay the alms-tax.

The first verse concerns the relationship between man and Allah, the second concerns the relationship between man and himself, and the third concerns the relationship between man and society. The last four verses are those holy verses that come after verse 114.

They speak of the purposefulness of the creation of Allah, the issue of Resurrection, monotheism, devotion to Allah, and focusing our attention upon Him.

Oh Allah! By the believers who are promised success in this Sura and for whom the Prophet (S) and his family are the forerunners, place us in this group and make us successful!

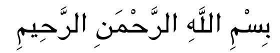
Oh Allah! Bestow Your pardon and forgiveness upon us, for You are The Beneficent, The Merciful.

Oh Allah! Render our destinies blissful and save us from any kind of deviation and error. Indeed, You are All-Powerful over every thing.

1. Kafi, Thawab ul-'A'mal, and 'Man la Yahdurhul-Faqih' (according to nur-uth-THaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 553)
2. Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 169
3. It is a very dry desert without vegetation and is very hot.
4. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 6, p. 243
5. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary, Vol. 2, p. 553
6. Ibid
7. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary, Vol. 2, p. 554
8. Kafi, narrated from Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 6, p. 268
9. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 6, p. 268
10. Ibid
11. These narrations were written by Sayyid 'Abdullah Shubbar in the book, Tasliat ul-Fu'ad fi Bayan il-maut wal-Ma'ad.
12. Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 169-170
13. Sura Al-Ghafir, No. 40, verse 26
14. While the deceased 'Allamah Majlisi mentions this matter in Bihar ul-'Anwar, he points out that likening the state of the intermediate world to the state of dreams and sleep has been mentioned in many narrations. It is even possible that some elevated and powerful souls have multiple atom-like forms, for there are narrations that say that the Imams will come to every one on the verge of death, and this does not need interpretations and apologies.
15. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 6, p. 277
16. For more narrations concerning this issue, refer to volume 6 of Bihar ul-'Anwar, where the conditions of the intermediate world and the grave are discussed
17. Sura Al-Hajj, No. 22, verses 1-2
18. Sura As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 27; and Sura At-Tur, No. 52, verse 25
19. Sura Al-Muddaththir, No. 74, verse 42
20. Bihar ul-'Awar, Vol. 7, p. 251, new edition
21. The word 'talfahu, ' in Arabic is a verb in future tense which indicates continuation of action.
22. Sura Al-Ahzab, No. 33, verse 33
23. Sura Al-Mu'minun, No. 23, verse 101
24. Bahr ul-Muhibbah, By Qazali, p. 41-44
25. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 3, p. 141
26. Muhajjat ul-Bayda', Vol. 7, p. 28
27. Bihar ul-'Awar, Vol. 74, p. 378
28. Ibid p. 180
29. Bihar ul-'Awar, Vol. 75, p. 41
30. Bihar ul-'Awar, Vol. 74, p. 386
31. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 3, p. 142
32. Sura Az-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 32
33. Sura Ath-Thariyat, No. 51, verse 56
34. Sura Al-Mulk, No. 67, verse 2
35. Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 119
36. Qurar ul-Hikam
37. Bihar, Vol. 5, p. 312
38. Nahj ul-Balaqah, saying No. 463
39. Sura Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 54
40. Sura Al-'Ankabut, No. 29, verse 20
41. Fakhr-i-Razi's, Commentary on the verse in question

Sura An-Nur, Chapter 24

(Revealed in Medina)
64 verses in 9 sections



In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The Grand View of Sura An-Nur

This Sura contains 64 verses and it has been sent down in Medina.

The reason why it has been named An-Nur (light), is its thirty fifth verse in which Allah has been introduced as:

"the Light of the heavens and the earth".

Since this holy Sura has recommended all believers, and specially women to be virgin and chaste, Islamic narrations do give much prominence to teaching and reciting this Sura by women.

In fact, it can be considered as the Sura of virginity, chastity, and struggle against sexual defilements, because the main part of its commandments is about removing society from sexual defilements through different ways, and this aim has been set in several steps:

1) It is the statement of severe punishments of adulterers and adulteresses which is mentioned with full decisiveness in the second verse of this Sura.

2) Executing this severe prescribed punishment is not an easy issue, and from the view of Islamic judicial scales it has strict condition. If a man accuses his wife of adultery, the program 'Li'an' (Conjugal anathema) must be carried out, we will explain it later.

And if a person accuses someone of fornication, that person must present 4 witnesses. Even if someone accuses other person of fornication, but he cannot prove it in the court of Islamic judgment, he will be extremely punished (one forth of prescribed punishment of fornication), so that no one can easily think of Islamic punishment of others by accusing them, otherwise that penalty will be imposed on himself.

3) Then, in this connection, the famous tradition known as 'Ifk' and the accusation that was pinned on one of the wives of the Prophet (S) are mentioned.

The Holy Qur'an follows this issue, so that it becomes completely clear that how great the sin of inventing rumour about virtuous persons is.

4) In order to prevent this thought that Islam is only content with punishing wrongdoers, the Sura mentions one of the important ways of preventing sexual defilements.

It in details explains the issue of preventing men from gloating women and preventing women form casting amorous, coquettish, or lecherous glances at men, because one of the important factors of sexual deviations is voyeur and non-veiling of women.

And defilements would not be expunged unless these are eradicated.

5) Again, to prevent engaging in unchaste actions, the commandment of easy and simple marriage is issued, so that unlawfully satisfying sexual instinct will be struggled by its lawful way.

6) Some of the rules of etiquette and principles of training offspring, concerning parents, are mentioned; stating that there are some times when husband and wife may want to be alone and isolated, so that issues must not enter their rooms without permission, for offspring may deviate intellectually thereby.

For this end, it states some other rules of family life, though they may be unrelated to sexual matters.

7) Some of the discussions that are about monotheism, origin, resurrection, and resignation to the command of the Prophet (S) are mentioned before these discussions, because what support all practical and ethical programs are the very doctrinal issues and the belief in origin, resurrection, and rightfulness of prophecy.

There will not be any branch, leaf, flower, and fruit, if such a root does not exist.

Meanwhile, in connection with discussions about faith and righteous deed, the establishment of the worldly government by the believers is stated and some of other Islam commandments are brought up. On the whole, the Sura has formed a comprehensive collection.

Virtue of Sura An-Nur

The Prophet (S) in a tradition has said:

"Whoever reads Sura An-Nur (*and applies it in his life*)*, for each faithful woman and man who were in the past and will be in the future Allah will give him 10 good acts as reward."*

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Protect your property and preserve your chastity by reading Sura An-Nur and immunize your own wives against deviations through obeying its commandments, because whoever continues reading this

Holy Sura in every day and night none of his family members will commit indecency as long as he lives."[1]

Paying attention to the content of the Sura which stands against immodesty through various ways of efficient struggles with factors of deviation from the path of chastity makes clear the main idea of the above-mentioned tradition as well as its practical concept.

1. Majma' ul-Bayan under the verse, the Thawab ul-'A'mal by Saduq (As it is narrated from Nur-uth-Thaqalyn Vol. 3, p. 568)

Section 1: Punishment for Adultery Prescribed

Sura An-Nur - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

سُورَةٌ أَنزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا وَأَنزَلْنَا فِيهَآ ءَايَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

1. " (This is) a Sura which We have sent down and which We have enjoined, and in it We have sent down clear signs, so that you might remember."

The Qur'anic word 'Sura' is an appellation taken by Allah for a collection of verses in the holy Qur'an. What we know is that the name of this Sura is Nur, and it is because of Nur verse, No. 35, which is one of the most conspicuous verses of the Sura.

Furthermore, the content of the Sura is especially luminous. It grants men and women in families and societies the light of chastity and virginity. It gives tongues and speeches the light of piety and veracity.

It gives hearts and souls the light of monotheism, theism, belief in the resurrection, and resignation to the godly invitation of the Prophet (S).

The first verse of the Sura concisely indicates all of the discussions in the Sura.

It says:

" (This is) a Sura which We have sent down and which We have enjoined, and in it We have sent

down clear signs, so that you might remember.”

The Arabic word /surah/ is derived from the word /sur/, meaning the height of a building. Then it was applied to the high walls that were built around cities for protecting against enemies’ attacks.

And since these walls separated city from the surrounding regions, this word gradually has been applied to a section or a part of something, including a section or piece of the Qur’an separated from the rest of it.

Some philologists have also said that the word /surah/ is applied to high, beautiful, erected buildings as well as various parts of a big structure. With the same proportion, it is applied to the various, parts of the Qur’an which are separated from each other.[1]

Anyway, this sentence refers to the fact that all ordinances and subjects of this Sura, including rules, rites, and doctrines, are extraordinarily important, because all of them have been sent down by Allah.

Specially the sentence /faradnaha/

(***“...We have ... which We have enjoined...”***)

emphasizes this meaning, considering that the meaning of the word /farada/ is ‘assertion’.

Using the holy phrase /’ayatin bayyinat/ (clear signs) may point to some facts about monotheism, origin, resurrection, and prophecy, which are presented in it. This phrase is for the clause /faradna/ (We enjoined) which points to the ordinances and commandments which are stated in this verse. In other words, one refers to ‘beliefs’ and the other one refers to ‘religious ordinances’.

Another possibility is that the purpose of /’ayatin bayyinat/ (clear signs) is some reasons that are mentioned for the obligatory commandments that are presented in this Sura.

The sentence /la‘allakum ta�akkarun/

(***‘...so that you might remember.’***)

again illustrates this fact in minds that all beliefs and doctrines and all practical programs of Islam are rooted in the very innate disposition of humans. Thus, their explanation is a kind of admonition and remembrance.

In this holy verse, there are three signs that indicate the magnificence of Sura An Nur:

A) The word ‘Surah’ that is in the beginning, is the sign of greatness.

B) The Arabic nunnation of the word ‘Surah’ is for greatness.

C) The Qur’anic word /’anzalna/ (We have sent down) has been mentioned twice in due verse.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 2

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلاَ تَأْخُذْكُم بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَآئِفَةٌ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

2. "The fornicatress and the fornicator, scourge you each one of them (with) a hundred stripes. And let not pity for them withhold you from enforcing the sentence of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the Believers witness their punishment."

According to the conditions of persons, there are different judgments of fornication. In this verse, only one of its cases is referred to, the case that if a celibate man or woman commits fornication, each of them will be flogged with one hundred stripes.

But if a person who has spouse and commits adultery, the punishment is stoning to death. If someone who has spouse, but he or she can not reach him or her (for example the spouse is behind bars), and commits fornication, the judgment of stoning to death is changed to stripes.

The holy Qur'an counts fornication as an indecency and horrible deed and prohibits it where it says:

"And do not approach fornication..."[2]***,***

and it counts the abundance of fornication as a sign for the true servants of Allah, where it says:

"The (faithful) servants of the Beneficent (Allah) are those who.nor commit formation..."[3]***,***

and again it considers the avoidance of committing this sin as the condition for the allegiance with the Prophet (S) as, in another occurrence, the Qur'an says:

"O Prophet! When believing women come unto thee, taking oath of allegiance unto thee that they ...will neither steal nor commit (or fornication) adultery ..."[4]

After this general statement of the verse, the first decisive and determining ordinance about fornicatress and fornicator is presented.

It says:

"The fornicatress and the fornicator, scourge you each one of them (with) a hundred stripes..."

To emphasize more, the Qur'an adds:

"...And let not pity for them withhold you from enforcing the sentence of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day..."

Finally, at the end of the verse to conclude this Divine punishment, another matter is added, where it says:

"...And let a party of the Believers witness their punishment."

As matter of fact, this verse contains 3 commandments:

1. The ordinance of punishing fornicatress and fornicator; (the purpose of fornication is unlawful sexual intercourse).

2. Emphasis on the matter of not being moved by compassion and sentiments at the time of executing divinely prescribed punishments. These sentiments and kindness yield as result only corruption and defilement in society.

But to deactivate the motivations of such sentiments, the Sura brings up the issue of belief in Allah and the Day of Judgment, because the sign of belie in origin and Resurrection is absolute resignation to Allah's commandment.

The belief in the Lord of the world, Who is All-Knowing, All-Wise, makes man know that each commandment is based on a philosophy and wisdom and is not legislated without any reason. Having faith in Resurrection causes man to feel responsibility for violations and transgressions.

Here, there is an interesting tradition that must be noted carefully:

The Prophet (S) says:

" (On the Day of Judgment) some of the rulers who have decreased one stripe from the divinely prescribed punishment will be fetched (to the place of gathering). They will be questioned why they had done such a thing.

They will answer:

'For having mercy on Your servants!

'Allah will say:

"Did you show more mercy to them than I did?"

The command of throwing him into Fire will be issued. Another person who has added one stripe to the divinely prescribed punishment will be brought (to the place). He will be asked why he did such an action.

He will answer:

'For preventing then from disobeying You.'

Allah will say:

‘Were you wiser and more knowing than Me?’

Then the command will be issued of throwing him into Fire.”[5]

3. The commandment of attendance of a group of believers in the place where the judgment of punishment is carried out. The aim is not only to make the wrongdoer learn lesson, the aim is that his punishment will work as an admonition for others.

In another word, considering the texture of man’s social life, a person’s ethical defilements are not limited to one person, but it influences society. For cleaning, the punishment must be carried out in public, as wrong action has become manifest.

Thus, in this way, the answer to the question that why Islam allows a man’s honour to be lost in the public becomes clear, because as far as the sin is not manifested and is not reported to the Islamic court, Allah, Who veils vices, does not will to unveil what is secret.

But after that the wrong action is proved, and its secret is uncovered, society is defiled and the sin decreases in importance, so punishment must be executed in a way that the negative effects of the sin may be deactivated and the magnitude of the sin can be reestablished.

Essentially, in a sound society, violation of law must be counted important. Surely if that violation is repeated, that importance will be broken. Its importance will be reset only through publicly punishing the offenders.

Moreover, we must pay attention to the fact that for many of people honour is more important than the issue of bodily punishment. This very publicizing of punishment suppresses their ungovernable low desires.

Some Narrations On Evils of Fornication

Some evils and harm of fornication are mentioned in one of the speeches of Imam Rida (as), including the followings:

1. Committing murder by abortion

2. Violation of structure of family and relationship

3. Abandonment of training issues

4. Ruin of criteria of heritage[6]

In the opinion of Ali (as), abandonment of fornication buttresses family (to be protected) and desertion of

sodomy protects generation.[7]

The holy Prophet (S) says:

"Fornication enjoys harms both in this world and the other world. In this world, there are ruins of man's luminosity and beauty, untimely death, and termination of the portion of sustenance.

And in the other world, there will be helplessness at the time of resurrection's reckoning, and there are Allah's rage and eternal Hell."[8]

There have been narrated in a tradition from the Prophet (p.b.u.h) who said:

1) "When fornication increases, sudden death increases, too."[9]

2) "Do not commit fornication, so that your wives do not get involve in fornication. Whoever violates another person's honour his honour will be violated. You will be treated as you treat others."[10]

3) "There are four things that if each of them exists in any house, that house will be desolate and void of blessing: A) Treachery B) Stealth C) Wine-Drinking D)Fornication."[11]

And:

"Fornication is one of the major sins."[12]

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Whenever people commit four sins, they will be involved in four disasters:

1. Whenever fornication prevails, earthquakes will occur.

2. Whenever people do not pay alms-tax, quadrupeds will be demolished and blessing will be taken from grains.

3. Whenever the judgment of judicial authorities is oppressive, there will be no rain.

4. Whenever breach of promise occurs, polytheists will get victory over Muslims."[13]

Some Messages

1. Sexual freedom and unlawful relations are forbidden.

2. The function of women in creating unlawful relations and preparing preliminaries of fornication is more considerable than that of men. On the contrary, in stealth, men have more function. Thus, in the verse, the Arabic word /zaniyah/ (fornicatress) precedes the word /zani/ (fornicator).

3. For correcting wrongdoer and protecting public chastity, bodily punishment is necessary.

(*“...scourge ... stripes”*)

4. In a liaison and intimacy, both parties must be punished equally.

(*“...each one of them...”*)

5. The amount of punishment must be measured by Allah.

(*“...a hundred stripes...”*)

6. In punishing wrongdoers, it is forbidden to be influenced by compassions and sentiments.

7. Compassion and kindness must be inside the range of religion.

(*“...And let not pity for them withhold you from enforcing the sentence...”*)

8. Religion is not only fasting and performing ritual prayer, but Divinely imposed limits are of the essential elements of religion, too.

(*“...the sentence of Allah...”*)

9. By believing in origin and resurrection, rules can be carried out firmly and decisively.

10. Carrying out the prescribed punishments is the sign of belief in Allah.

(*“...if you believe in Allah...”*)

11. Punishment must be in a way that others take lesson. The verse says:

(*“...And let a party of the Believers witness their punishment.”*)

12. A person who commits fornication must be both bodily and psychically punished.

13. People’s attendance is a lever to control both the judge and the executer.

14. Believers’ attendance should be used for prohibition of committing evil.

15. Only Muslims are allowed to attend the occasion of execution of Divinely-prescribed punishment

Sura An-Nur - Verse 3

الزَّانِي لاَ يَنكِحُ إِلاَّ زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً وَالزَّانِيَةُ لاَ يَنكِحُهَآ إِلاَّ زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ وَحُرِّمَ ذَلِكَ عَلَي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

3. “The fornicator shall not marry save a fornicatress or an idolatress, and the fornicatress, none shall marry her save a fornicator or an idolater; and all that is forbidden unto the believers.”

The Muslim believers, men and women, must marry chaste and pure spouses.

Corrupted people are unwelcome in an Islamic society. Since the above-mentioned verse speaks about the punishment of fornicator and fornicatress, a question raises that how the lawful marriage with such persons is judged.

This verse answers this question in this way:

"The fornicator shall not marry save a fornicatress or an idolatress, and the fornicatress, none shall marry her save a fornicator or an idolater; and all that is forbidden unto the believers."

Upon the subject that this holy verse is the statement of a Divine ordinance or it mentions only a natural and external phenomenon, commentators discuss differently:

Some believe that this verse mentions only an objective reality or fact that defilers go after defilers or birds of a feather flock together, but believers and pure persons do not go along with such evils and do not marry impure spouses. Believers prohibit themselves from it. What confirms this interpretation is the very apparent of the verse which has been stated in a predictive form.

But some others believe that this holy sentence declares a religious and Divine ordinance, which specially intends to prevent Muslims from marrying those persons who commit fornication, because, like physical illnesses, ethical diseases are often infectious. Moreover, this is counted a shame and disgrace for pure persons.

What is more important is that the offspring who are bred by such skeptical and impure persons have an ambiguous destiny. Regarding these facts, Islam has prevented it.

This interpretation is confirmed by this sentence which consists of the sense of prohibition:

"...and all that is forbidden unto the believers."

There are many traditions stated by the Prophet (S) and other infallible Imams (as) in this regard that establish the validity of this interpretation indicating that this verse declares an ordinance.

Even some of great commentators have said about the occasion of revelation of this verse:

"A Muslim man asked the Prophet's permission for marrying a woman called ''Umm-i-Mahzul' who, in the Age of Ignorance, was notorious for immodesty and even she had hanged a flag as a sign on the door of her house. At that time, this verse was sent down and the Prophet (S) answered him."[14]

Another tradition, narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as), says:

"This verse is about those men and women who committed fornication at the age of the Prophet (S). Allah prohibited Muslims from marrying them. Right now this judgment covers all people. None should

marry one who commits this wrong action and is punished according to Divinely-prescribed measures until his or her repentance is declared."

This is a worth-mentioning matter that many of the divine ordinances are stated in the form of predicative sentence. To state Divine ordinances in the form of imperative and prohibitive sentence is not always necessary.

By the way it must be noted that connecting 'idolater' to 'fornicator' is in fact for stating the importance of the matter. It means that the sin of fornication is equal to idolatry, because in some narrations we read that when a person commits fornication, he has no faith.

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Fornicator is not a believer when he commits fornication. Likewise a thief does not have faith at the time of stealing, because at the time of doing this action, his faith is taken away as shirt is taken off."[15]

Some Matters to Study

1. The Cases of Fornication That Necessitates the Death Sentence

What has been mentioned upon the fornication judgment in the above-mentioned noble verse is a common ordinance that has also some exceptional cases, including adultery whose prescribed punishment is death sentence if its conditions are confirmed.

The purpose of the Arabic word /muhsin/ concerning adultery is a man who has got wife and his wife is with him and /muhsinah/ is woman who has got husband and her husband is with her.

If a person who is provided with such a lawful way commits fornication, his Islam prescribed punishment is death sentence. How this sentence is carried out is explained in the books of Islamic jurisprudence.

The sentence that is issued about the one who commits incest is execution too. Rape is also a felony punishable by execution.

Of course, in some cases there are also some additional punishments other than flagging, such as exile and so on. For these punishments, we must read their explanation in the jurisprudence books.

2. Why Does the Word 'Fornicatress' Precede the Word 'Fornicator'?

Undoubtedly this unchaste act is ugly and bad for every one, but for women it is worse and uglier, because they are more modest and decorous. If this modesty and decorousness is ruined, it will be a reason for more violent disobedience.

Moreover, although its evil consequences affect both of them, women will be affected with more evil consequences. Another possibility is that this ugly matter is more tempted by women and in many cases

women are the main factor and origin of temptation.

All of these reasons have caused unchaste women to be mentioned before impure men in the above verse, but chaste women and pure men are far from all these affairs.

3. Why is Punishment to Be Carried Out in a Gathering?

The above holy verse, which is in the form of imperative sentence, indicates that a group of believers must be present when the prescribed punishment of fornication is carried out.

But the holy Qur'an has not stipulated that this Islamic sentence must be carried out positively in public, but depending on conditions and interests, it may be changed; for example, only the presence of 3 or more persons is enough. It is important that the judge decides how many persons must attend the occasion.

The philosophy of this judgment is also obvious, , because as we said before:

First: It will be a lesson for all people and it will make society pure.

Second: The shame of the offender prevents committing the wrong action in the future.

Third: When the prescribed punishment is carried out before some persons, the judge and the executers of the punishment will not be accused of taking bribe, collusion, discrimination, torturing and such like.

Fourth: The attendance of people prevents self-interest and excess in carrying out the punishment.

Fifth: It is possible that, after the execution of punishment, the wrongdoer accuses and rumours about judge and executer, but the attendance of people makes his status clear and prevents his destructive activities in the future. And there are many other advantages.

4. What Was the Prescribed Punishment of a Fornicator?

It is understood from the 15th and 16th verses of Sura An-Nissa' that before the time that the ordinance of Sura An-Nur about adulterer and adulteress was sent down, their punishment had been life sentence (being imprisoned forever) if they were married and if they were not married they had to be punished and persecuted.

(***".. .punish them both..."***)

The measure of this punishment is not clear, but the concerning verse specifies mat it must be one hundred stripes. Thus, the death sentence takes the place of life sentence (being imprisoned forever) for those who are married, and the sentence of one hundred stripes takes the place of the sentence of punishment and persecution for those who are not married.

5. Going to Extremes in Executing the Prescribed Punishment is Forbidden!

Without doubt, humane and sentimental issues demand ultimate attempt to save every innocent individual from being punished. Also as far as Divine ordinances allow indulgence and pardon, wrongdoers should be pardoned.

But when the crime or offence is proved and the prescribed punishment is decided, decisiveness and firmness of rule must be observed, and false sentiments, which harm the system of society, must be put away.

Specially in the concerned verse, the sentence /fi din-illah/

(***"...from enforcing the sentence of Allah..."***)

is used. It means that when it is Allah's ordinance, no one can exceed Allah, the Beneficent, The Merciful.

Here, in this verse, the overcoming of affectionate sentiments is prohibited, because most people have such a mood. It is possible that these affectionate sentiments overcome them, but it cannot be denied that there is a minority that advocates more violation and severity.

The mentioned group is also, as we mentioned before, away from the path of Allah's ordinance and these people must control their sentiments and do not exceed Allah, because that deserves to be severely punished, too.

6. How is Marriage with Fornicator and Fornicatress Illegalized?

We have already said that the above-mentioned verses apparently illegalize marriage with fornicator and fornicatress. Of course, this ordinance is limited to men and women who were notorious for this action and have not repented.

Thus, if they are not notorious for this action, or if they have withdrawn from their former deeds and have decided to be pure and chaste and have shown that they are penitent, marriage with them is lawfully permitted.

In the second status, it is for the reason that the titles 'fornicator' and 'fornicatress' are not applied to them, because they are no longer in the previous condition. But in the first status, this stipulation is understood from the Islamic narrations and the occasion of the revelation of verse confirms it, too.

In a reputable tradition we read that Zurarah, a famous jurist, asked Imam Sadiq (as) about the commentary of the Qur'anic phrase:

"The fornicator shall not marry save a fornicatress...".

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"This verse refers to women and men who had been notorious for fornication and they were known for this evil act in the society. Today it is the same; it is not good to marry one who has been punished for fornication or is notorious for this ugly action, unless his or her repentance is declared."[16]

7. Philosophy of Banning Fornication

We do not think that nobody is aware of gloomy consequences that cover society and individual, but a little explanation in this field is necessary: Occurrence of this evil action and its prevalence unquestionably disorder the structure of family. It makes the relationship between father and son dark and gloomy.

It increases issues having no identity in the society, the issues who, according to experience, will become dangerous felons. This disgraceful action causes kinds of strife and quarrels between the sensual ones.

Moreover, every one knows that psychic and venereal diseases, murdering offspring, abortion, and suchlike crimes are its gloomy results. In brief, if offspring of adultery increases in a society, the social relationships, which are based on family relations, will terribly become shaky and unstable.

To find out how important this mater is, we must imagine for a moment that if fornication is to be permissible in man's society thoroughly and marriage is to be extinct, in this condition no one would take care of infants who are born with no identity, neither in their infanthood, nor in their adulthood.

Moreover these issues will be deprived of kindness and compassion, which plays an important role in struggling with violations and crimes, and human society changes into a completely bestial society which is accompanied with violation in all aspects.

Of course, this disgraceful act causes kinds of individual and social conflicts and fights between those who are capricious. The stories that have been narrated about the interior conditions of the notorious places and centers of corruption indicate this fact that sometimes the worst crimes take place along with sexual deviations.

In addition to that, experience has informed us and science has proved that this deed causes and spreads kinds of diseases. Although many organizations are prepared for struggling against its consequences, figures show that how many persons have lost and will lose their health because of this act.

This action often causes abortion, murdering of issues, and termination of generation, because such women are not willing to look after such issues of theirs and essentially the existence of offspring is a big barrier against continuity of their gloomy actions, so they always try to put an end to them.

And this chimerical theory that such issues can be gathered in some institutions that are controlled by government is not obviously practicable. It has been proved that how many problems exist in breeding fatherless and motherless children. Even then these brutal issues are products of an inferior quality. They are uncivilized unscrupulous wrongdoers.

Even we must not forget that the purpose of marriage is not only satisfying sexual instinct, but participation in organizing a family, spiritual familiarity and mental tranquility, training issues, and cooperation in all affairs of life are the consequences of lawful marriage.

And these are not possible unless man and woman are limited and allocated to each other and that the banning of fornication should be observed.

Some Traditions On Fornication

1. Imam Ali ibn-Abitalib (as) in a tradition said:

"I heard the Prophet (S) say:

'There are six evil effects in fornication, three of them are in this world, and three of them in the other world. Those which are for this world are: A) It will take man's luminousness. B) It terminates provisions. C) It speeds up destruction of man. And those which are for the other world are: A) Allah's anger B) Severity of reckoning C) Entering into Fire or eternal abiding in Hell'."[17]

2. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"One of the sins that withhold sustenance is fornication."[18]

3. The Prophet (S) said:

"Allah's fury is severe and harsh toward those who commit fornication."[19]

4. Imam Ali (as) said:

"A fervent man never commits fornication."[20]

5. It has been narrated:

"Verily fornication brings blackness of face, causes poverty, shortens the lifetime, terminates the provision. It ruins beauty and glory and brings Allah's anger near and the doer of it is wretched and ashamed."[21]

6. The Prophet (S) said:

"When fornication increases after me, sudden death does increase."[22]

7. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“Verily a person who enters his sperm in an unlawful womb on the Hereafter Day will have severer punishment.”*23

8. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

*“When a man commits fornication, the spirit of faith abandons him.”*24

9. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“When fornication increases (in a society), many earthquakes occur.”*25

10. The Prophet (S) said:

*“There are four things that if one of them enters a home, it will destroy it, and which will not be well set-up with blessing: stealth, treachery, wine-drinking, and fornication.”*26

11. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Do good to your fathers, so that your issues will do good to you. And abstain from people’s wives, so that your wives will be chaste (and safe).”

Sura An-Nur - Verses 4-5

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلاَ تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَداً وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

4. “And those who accuse chaste women (with adultery) but do not bring four witnesses, then scourge them (with) eighty stripes and do not (afterward) accept their testimony forever, and these are they that are evil-doers, ”
5. “Save those who repent thereafter and make amends, for verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”

Accusation is like shooting arrow to the honor and dignity of people and not observing it. And, the punishment of accusing married and chaste women is more severe.

Since the pervious verses consist of a heavy punishment for men and women who commit fornication, and it is possible that some impious malicious individuals accuse a few pure and chaste persons, thus immediately after mentioning of severe punishment of adulterers, the punishment of those who accuse

others and intend to misuse this ordinance is declared, so that the honor and respect of chaste families can be saved from the threat of such persons, and no one dare denigrate people.

At first, it says:

"And those who accuse chaste women** (**with adultery**) **but do not bring four witnesses, then scourge them** (**with**) **eighty stripes..."

After this heavy punishment, two more ordinances are added, where it says:

"...and do not** (**afterward**) **accept their testimony forever, and these are they that are evil-doers, "

Thus, in this way, not only such persons are heavily punished, but also their testimony and speech is invalid and invaluable in a long term, so that they cannot defame pure individuals. Moreover, the mark of impurity is set on them and they will be scandalized in the society.

This austereness in saving reputation of pure people is not limited to this case here, but it is also seen in many Islamic teachings. It indicates how extremely Islam values reputation of pure female and male believers.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

"When a Muslim accuses his Muslim brother of a matter (*that is not done by him*), *faith will vanish from his heart as salt melts in water."*[27]

However, in view of the fact that Islam never closes the path of return to anyone, and it uses every opportunity to encourage wrongdoers to purify themselves and atone for the former errors and mistakes, in the next verse the Qur'an adds:

"Save those who repent thereafter and make amends, for verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Therefore, according to the traditions narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) and other Imams (as), by repenting both their testimony is valid in the future and the judgment of being mischievous is abrogated of them in all fields, because a person who has repented and become just again, the title of being mischievous will be taken from him.

Some Traditions on Repentance

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"An individual who repents his sin is like a person who is sinless."[28]

2. The Prophet (S) said:

"Nothing is more liked before Allah than a faithful man and woman who regret about sin and then

repent."[29]

3. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Impart the pleasant odour of seeking forgiveness, so that the offensive smell of sins does not stigmatize you."[30]

4. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The favorite servant before Allah is a well-doer who repents a lot."[31]

Pay Attention to Some Points

1. What Does the Word 'ramy' Mean Here?

The Arabic word /ramy/ basically means throwing stones or shooting arrows and like, and it is natural that in many cases it harms. Then this Arabic word has been used sarcastically in accusation of individuals, cursing, abusing and unfair imputation, because as if these words and speeches are like arrows that hit the body of a person and wound him.

Perhaps it is for this reason that this word has been used in an absolute form in the verses under discussion and later verses.

For example, it has not mentioned,

"Those who accuse chaste women of adultery",

because considering verbal contexts, the word 'fornication' has been omitted in the concept of the word /yarmuna/. Moreover, the lack of clearly expressing it, when chaste women are mentioned, is– considered as a kind of courtesy, respect, and chastity in words.

2. Why Four Witnesses?

We know that in Islam two just witnesses are usually enough for proving crimes and asserting rights. Even in the case of homicide when there are two witnesses, the crime is proved, but in the question of accusation to adultery four witnesses are especially necessary.

The reason that witness outweighs here is possibly the fact that many people accuse others very easily and they always mar reputation and honour of individuals suspiciously or not suspiciously. Islam is rather uncompromising in this respect so that people's honour can be saved. But in other issues, even homicide, individuals' tongue is not so defiled.

Moreover, in homicide there is only one party, i.e. the criminal is one, but in adultery two persons are charged with the crime, and if we require two witnesses for each of them, there will be four witnesses.

This statement is the content of a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as). Abu Hanifah, the famous Sunni jurist, says:

"I asked Imam Sadiq (as) that whether fornication is more condemnable than homicide.

He said:

'No, homicide is.'

Then I said:

'Why are two witnesses enough in proving homicide, but fornication requires 4 witnesses?'

He said:

'What do you say about this matter?'

Abu Hanifah could not answer explicitly.

Imam said:

"This is because there are two prescribed punishments in fornication, one of them is for man and the other one is for woman. So two witnesses are needed. But in homicide only one prescribed punishment is inflicted on murderer."[32]

Of course there are some cases of fornication for which prescribed punishment is inflicted on one party (e.g. rape and suchlike), but these are the exceptional instances. What is common and obvious is the one that is committed with mutual agreement, but we know that the philosophy of ordinances depends on prevailing individuals.

3. Important Condition of Repentance

We have reiterated this fact that repentance is not only asking Allah's forgiveness or feeling remorse about past deeds or even deciding to relinquish an evil act in the future, but in addition to all these things the wrongdoer must put his best foot forward to amend the past.

If he has really marred reputation and honour of a pure man or woman, he must, in order to make his repentance accepted, deny what he has said in the presence of those who have heard his accusation, so to speak, he must rehabilitate the disgraced person.

The Qur'anic holy phrase /wa 'aslahu/

(***"...who ... make amends..."***)

that has come after the phrase /tabu/

(*“…who repent…”*)

indicates this fact that such persons must repent from their sins and then must atone what wrong they have committed. This is not right that another one accuses a person of lying in public (or by means of press or mass media) and then, in his home, when he is alone, he asks Allah’s forgiveness. Allah never accepts such repentance.

Therefore, there are some traditions narrated from the leaders of Islam as an answer to the question that whether the testimony of those who accuse someone of dishonour is accepted after they repent and are prescribedly punished; their answer is “Yes”.

And when it was asked how his repentance is done, they said:

*“He will come to Imam (or Islamic judge) and will say: ‘I accused so and as and I repent of what I have said’.”*33

4. The Ordinances of ‘qathf’: (False Accusation of Unlawful Intercourse)

In the book entitled: “Hudud” (prescribed punishments), there is a chapter which is called:

“the prescribed punishment of Qathf”.

The word ‘Qathf’ (on the rhythm of ‘Hazf’) means hurling something to a far away place. But in these cases, like the Arabic word /ramy/, it alludes to dishonouring accusation of an individual. In other words, it is scurrility and foul language related to these matters.

Whenever ‘Qathf’ is done explicitly and affirmatively in any language and in any form, its prescribed punishment is 80 stripes, as it was mentioned above.

If it is not explicit and affirmative, it is subject to the ordinance of discretionary punishment (the purpose of ‘discretionary punishment’ is those sins that have no definite prescribed punishment in religion, but it is up to the Islamic judge to decide the measure and the way of punishment in a certain case with regard to the characteristics of the criminal and the quality of crime as well as other conditions).

Even if a person accuses a group of people of such a crime, swears at them and accuses them one by one (singly), there will prescribed punishment of Qathf for each accusation separately.

But if he accuses them on the whole or altogether, and if they jointly and intemperately ask punishment for him, he will be inflicted with one prescribed punishment, but if they separately take legal action against him, for each accusation he will be imposed with one independent prescribed punishment.

This is so important that if a person is accused of such a crime and this person dies, his heirs can sue accuser and ask prescribed punishment for the accuser.

Of course, since this ordinance is among the personal rights, and if an entitled person forgives wrongdoer, his prescribed punishment will be canceled, unless this offence is repeated so many times that reputation and honour of society is threatened, in this case this crime will be treated differently.

If two persons use bad language about reputation of each other, there will be no prescribed punishment for both of them, but they will be imposed with discretionary punishment as judge decides. Thus, no Muslim has right to answer back foul language, but he can only demand his rights through the judge of religion and asks for punishment of bad language user.

Anyway, the purpose of this Islamic ordinance is, first: saving men's honour and reputation, and second is, preventing ample social and moral corruptions which bedevil the society, because if corrupted persons are to be free, they will swear at and accuse every one unjustly and then they are saved from punishment.

In this condition, people's reputation and honour are always at risk and even these unjust accusations make a spouse cynical of other half. And father will be skeptical of his issue's legitimacy.

In short, the existence of family will be threatened, atmosphere of suspicion and skepticism prevails society, rumour-mongers drive a roaring line, and all chaste persons will be stained in the opinion of people.

Here, there will be the demand of decisiveness, the same decisiveness which Islam has presented to these bad language users.

Yes, they must be flogged with 80 stripes as penalty for their evil and accusing swearing, so that they will never fiddle with people's reputation and honour.

Sura An-Nur - Verses 6-10

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُمْ شُهَدَآءُ إِلاَّ أَنفُسُهُمْ فَشَهَادَةُ أَحَدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

وَالْخَامِسَةُ أَنَّ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِن كَانَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

وَيَدْرَؤُا عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ أَن تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعَ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ غَضَبَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَآ إِن كَانَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

وَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ حَكِيمٌ

6. "And (***as for***) ***those who accuse their wives*** (***with adultery***)***, and have*** (***in support***) ***no witness except themselves, then the testimony of one of them*** (***shall be taken***) ***four times*** (***swearing***) ***by Allah that verily iie is of the truthful*** (***ones***)***;"***
7. "And the fifth (***oath to be***) ***that the curse of Allah be on him if he is one of the liars."***
8. "And it shall avert the punishment from her if she bears witness four times (***swearing***) ***by Allah that verily he is one of the liars, "***
9. "And the fifth (***oath***) ***should be that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he is of the truthful*** (***ones***)***."***
10. "And had it not been Allah's grace and His mercy on you, and that Allah is Oft-Pardoning, All-Wise, (***you would have been ruined and undone***)***."***

Occasion of Revelation

Among some of the Companions, Sa'ad Ibn 'Ibadeh (the great of The Helpers) told the Prophet (S):

"O' Prophet of Allah! When accusing someone of this unchaste action has such a punishment that if an accuser can not prove it, he will be flogged with 80 stripes, so what can I do when I enter my home and I do see that a miscreant man is having sexual intercourse with my wife?

If I wait for four persons to come and see and then testify, the time has passed and that evil man has done his job, and if I want to kill him, no one believes me without witnesses and I will be retaliated justly as a murderer; and if I tell what I have seen to judge, I will be flogged with 80 stripes."

Some minutes later his cousin (son of his uncle) by the name of Hilal-Ibn 'Umayyah entered to report to the Prophet (S) that he had seen a miscreant man with his wife at night.

He explicitly said:

"I have seen this fact with my own eyes and I heard their voice with my own ears."

At this time the Prophet (S) became so annoyed that the sign of his unhappiness appeared in his blessed face. Hilal said:

"I see by your face how annoyed you have become, but, by Allah, I tell the truth and I hope Allah Himself helps me."

At this time Gabriel came down and revealed this verse and its following four verses to the Prophet (S) and presented Muslims its real exact solution.

Here, the Holy Qur'an has excluded some cases from the judgment of Qathf (false accusation); if a

husband accuses his wife of unchaste action and says that he has seen her while she was doing sexual intercourse with a strange man, Qathf judgment will not be imposed on this husband, and, on the other hand, the husband's claim about his wife will not be accepted without reason and witness.

Here, the holy Qur'an suggests a proposition that the problem will be solved justly and in a most excellent way. That proposition is that the husband must first testify four times for proving that his claim is true.

As the Qur'an says:

"And** (**as for**) **those who accuse their wives** (**with adultery**)**, and have** (**in support**) **no witness except themselves, then the testimony of one of them** (**shall be taken**) **four times** (**swearing**) **by Allah that verily he is of the truthful** (**ones**)**;"

And in the next verse the Qur'an says:

"And the fifth** (**oath to be**) **that the curse of Allah be on him if he is one of the liars."

Thus it implies that the husband repeats this sentences for four times, saying: he testifies by Allah that he is telling the truth in accusing his wife of adultery!

In the fifth time the husband says that: May he be cursed by Allah if he tells a lie.

Now the wife is facing a dilemma; if she confirms her husband's words or she does not agree to deny this accusation, according to the way that is mentioned in the next verse, she will decisively be imposed with prescribed punishment of fornication.

Thus in the next verse it says:

"And it shall avert the punishment from her if she bears witness four times** (**swearing**) **by Allah that verily he is one of the liars, "

And the next verse mentions:

"And the fifth** (**oath**) **should be that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he is of the truthful** (**ones**)**."

Thus, the wife testifies five times that her husband's five-time-declared testimony that she has committed adultery is untrue.

Four times she repeats this sentence:

"I testify by Allah that he is telling untruth in his accusation of my adultery."

In the fifth time she declares an oath saying:

“Should be that she solemnly invokes the wrath of Allah upon herself if he (her accuser) is telling the truth.”

The fulfilment of this Islamic custom in Arabic is called /li‘an/ (conjugal anathema, or imprecation) because of the word /la‘n/ (curse) mentioned in the above sentences. Doing /li‘an/ leads to four certain judgments for these two spouses.

A) Without the formula of repudiation (divorce), they will immediately separate from each other.

B) This wife and husband will be perpetually unlawful to each other; and there will never be the chance of a new marriage between them.

C) There will be no Qathf punishment for this husband and the prescribed punishment of adultery for the wife.

D) The issue that is created through this phenomenon will not be related to husband, but the issue's affinity with wife remains.

Finally in the last one of the concerned verses, it says:

“And had it not been Allah’s grace and His mercy on you, and that Allah is Oft-Pardoning, All-Wise, (you would have been ruined and undone).”

In fact this holy verse is as a compact indication that puts emphasis on the above judgments, because it shows that the custom of /li‘an/ is a Divine bounteousness that solves the problem of relationship between wife and husband in a right way.

First, it does not compel husband to be silent when he saw his wife has committed a wrong action and to withdraw from instituting legal proceedings.

Second, as soon as the accusation takes place, it does not declare wife to the prescribed punishment of adultery and it grants wife the right to defend herself.

Third, it does not demand husband to go after four witnesses when he saw this scene and so lets the cat out of the bag.

Fourth, it divorces this wife and husband who are unable to continue their married life and even it does not allow them to be spouses with each other again in the future, because if this accusation is true, they can not psychically continue their married life and if it is a lie, wife’s sentiment is so spoiled that returning to a new life becomes difficult, because the result of such affair is animosity and hostility not chilly detachment.

Fifth, it also settles the situation of the issue.

By using a delicate, measured, and just solution, Allah has cleared up this difficult problem. He has shown His bless, bounteousness, forgiveness, and intellect towards His servants.

If we contemplate this matter, we see that the main judgment that demands four witnesses is not totally cancelled, but in case of wife and husband each of these four 'testimonies' are substituted for one 'witness' and some of its judgments are taken into consideration.

Some Matters to Be Mentioned

1. Why is Qathf Allocated to Spouses?

The first question that is brought up here is that what characteristics do two spouses have that such an exceptional judgment has been declared about them?

The answer of this question can be, on one hand, found in the occasion of revelation of the verse, and that is when a man sees his wife with a strange man he can not be silent, if he possibly wants.

How does his jealousy allow him to show no reaction against infringement of his honour and reputation? If he wants to go to judge and say something, he will be imposed with Qathf punishment, because the judge does not know he is right, perhaps he tells a lie.

If he wants to go after 4 witnesses, it will be against his face and reputation; moreover, it is possible that the affair ends during finding of witnesses.

On the other hand, strange persons accuse each other of this evil action very soon, but wife and husband accuse each other less. Thus, having 4 witnesses is necessary for strange persons, otherwise Qathf punishment will be carried out, but it is not the same for wife and husband. Therefore, this judgment is because of their characteristics.

2. Li'an, a Special Program

According to explanations that were given in the commentary of the verses, to annul Qathf punishment of man who accuses his wife of adultery, man must testify four times by Allah that he is telling the truth.

As a matter of fact, in this special case, each of these four testimonies takes place of a witness. And in the fifth time he most heartedly and willingly wishes Allah's curse, if he tells a lie.

Considering that these regulations are usually carried out along with religious obligations in an Islamic environment, and when one person sees that he must so decisively testify by Allah in the presence of an Islamic judge, and he must curse himself, most of times this bad action (accusation) is not committed. And this prevents man from untrue accusations.

The fact that the wife must testify four times by Allah that this accusation is untrue, is to equalize the

testimony of wife and husband. And, since wife is the one who is accused of adultery, she defends herself in the fifth time with a more severe sentence than that of the men and she demands Allah's wrath if the husband tells the truth.

We know that 'La'nat' (curse)means not enjoying Allah's mercy, but 'Qadab' (wrath) is something worse than being aloof of Allah's mercy, because wrath demands a punishment that is more than cursing. Thus, in the commentary of Sura Al-Hamd, we said that 'Maqdub-i- 'Alayhim'

(***"…not*** (***the path***) ***of those inflicted with Your wrath"***)

are persons who are worse than 'Dallin'

(***"… (those) gone astray."),***

though 'Dallih' or those who go astray do not certainly acquire Allah's mercy.

Some Traditions On Calumny

1. Imam Rida (as) narrated from his fathers who said:

"The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

'One who calumniates a faithful man or woman, or says something about her (or him) which is not in him (or her), in the Resurrection Day Allah, the Exalted, will set that calumniator on a heap of Fire so that what he has said about him or her comes out of him, (and he will be cleaned by suffering that chastisement)."[34]

2. Imam Ali (as) said:

"A believer does not deceive his (religious) brother, nor does he betray him, nor does he disappoint him, nor does he slander him, nor does he says: 'I hate you'."[35]

3. Imam Ali (as) said:

"The (sin of) culminating someone (who is clean and pure) is heavier than skies."[36]

4. Imam Ali (as) said:

"No shamelessness is like culmination."[37]

5. The Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever calumniates a Muslim in order to bother him, on the Day of Judgment Allah will keep him in the bile sludge of Hell-dwellers till He judges between people."[38]

1. Lisan ul-'Arab, Vol. 4, article 'sur'
2. Sura 'Isra No. 17, verse 32
3. Sura Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 63 and 68
4. Sura Al-Mumtahanah, No. 60, verse 12
5. The commentary of Fakhr-i-Razi, Vol. 23, p. 148
6. Bihar, Vol. 79, p. 24
7. Nahj ul-Balaqah, Wisdom 252
8. Bihar, Vol. 77, p. 58
9. Bihar, Vol. 73, p. 372
10. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 27
11. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 19
12. Ibid
13. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 21
14. Majm' ul-Bayan and Qurtabi in his commentary has narrated this tradition
15. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, p.26, as narrated from Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 571
16. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, p. 335
17. Majma' ul-Bayan, Vol. 6, p. 414
18. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 23
19. Nahj ul-Fisahah, p. 57
20. The explanation of Nahj ul-Balaqah, by Ibn Abi Al-Hadid, Vol. 19, p. 311
21. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 28
22. Bihar, Vol. 70, p. 369 and Furu'-i-Kafi, Vol. 5, p. 541
23. Wasa'il, Vol. 5, p. 47
24. Wasa'il, Vol. 6, p. 256
25. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 21
26. Khisal, by Saduq, p. 182
27. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 269
28. Bihar, Vol. 6, p. 21
29. Safinah the article 'repentance'
30. Bihar, Vol. 6, p. 22
31. Wasa'il, Vol. 6, p. 369
32. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 574
33. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. 18, p. 283 (chapter of testimony, section 36, tradition 4)
34. Bihar, Vol. 27, p. 194
35. Bihar, Vol. 72, p. 194
36. Kanz ul-'Ummal, Vol. 3, p. 102
37. Qurar ul-Hikam; 10455
38. Kanz ul-'Ummal, tradition No. 7925

Section 2: The Scandal Against Ayshah

Sura An-Nur - Verses 11-14

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَآءُوا بِالإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِنكُمْ لاَ تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرّاً لَّكُم بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُم مَا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الإِثْمِ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّي كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

لَوْلآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنفُسِهِمْ خَيْراً وَقَالُوا هَذَآ إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ

لَوْلاَ جَآءُوا عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِالشُّهَدَآءِ فَأُوْلَئِكَ عِندَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ

وَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالاَخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَآ أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

11."Verily those who brought forward the lie are a band of you. Do not regard it an evil to you; nay, it is good for you. Unto every man of them will be paid that which he has earned of the sin; and as for him among them who had the greater part therein, he shall have a grievous chastisement."
12. "Why did not the believers, men and women, when you heard of it, think well of themselves; and say: 'This is a manifest lie'?"
13. "Why did they not bring four witnesses about it? But since they have not brought witnesses, they are liars before Allah."
14. "And had it not been Allah's and grace His mercy on you in the world and the Hereafter, a grievous chastisement would certainly have touched you on account of the discourse which you entered into."

The Adventure of 'Ifk, (a Great Slander)

It is understood from all the verses 11-16 that an innocent person was accused of unchaste act at the descending of these verses, and this rumour was spread throughout the society.

When a group of hypocrites, who were apparently Muslim, also wanted to use this event maliciously for causing Islamic society harm and for the sake of their own interest and weakening the common reputation of the Prophet (S), these verses were sent down and so this incident was dealt with in an unprecedented resoluteness. And so the insulting astray-goers and sinister hypocrites were firmly suppressed.

The holy Qur'an, without mentioning the main phenomenon in this verse, says:

"Verily those who brought forward the lie are a band of you..."

Then it commiserates the believers who were very annoyed by accusing a pure person of such an evil act, by saying:

"...Do not regard it an evil to you; nay, it is good for you..."

By means of it, the evil intentions of some of defeated enemies and undiscerning hypocrites were uncovered and

these outwardly good persons who were of a bad character, were disgraced. Possibly if this event had not occurred and they had still remained unknown, they would have attacked more severely and dangerously in the future.

This event taught the Muslims a lesson that following rumourmongers will cause them lose every thing. They must firmly resist this matter.

Then, two points are mentioned in the remaining part of the verse.

At first, it says:

"...Unto every man of them will be paid that which he has earned of the sin..."

It indicates that the great responsibility of those who led and found a sin would never prevent the responsibility of others, but every person is as responsible for a sin as he participates and shares in a conspiracy.

For the second step, the verse continues saying:

"...and as for him among them who had the greater part therein, he shall have a grievous chastisement."

Commentators say that this person was 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abi Maslul, who was the chief person of 'Ifk companions. Some others have also mentioned Mastah Ibn 'Ithamah and Hassan Ibn Thabit as the referent of this concept.

Anyway, the one who was more active than others and set off the flames of 'Ifk and is considered as the leader of the group will be imposed with a punishment as great as his sin is great.

Then, in the next verse, the believers who were deceived in this affair and were influenced by this group are severely reprimanded through a few verses.

At first, it says:

"Why did not the believers, men and women, when you heard of it, think well of themselves; and say: this is a manifest lie?"

It means those why believers did not think good of other believers, who are as their own selves, when they heard hypocrites' words about their faithful persons, and why they did not say that it was a great and manifest slander.

They knew the evil and notorious background of these hypocrites. They were certain out of various contexts that such an accusation was impossible. They were well aware of that accused person's chastity.

They knew the plots which were planned and were carried out against the Prophet (S). Nevertheless, they must be reprimanded that they heard such false rumours and they remained silent, the worse was when they consciously or unconsciously spread it!

It is interesting that instead of asking believers to think good of the one who is accused of this calumny, it says they must think well of themselves. This way of speaking means that believers are of one essence, and if one of them is accused, it is as though all of them were accused.

They are like the limbs of each other, if world brings harm to one of the limbs, the other limbs do not stay calm and indifferent. As one is to defend himself against accusations, one must defend his religious female and male brothers.

The use of the word /'anfus/, in such cases, also is seen in other verses of the holy Qur'an, including Sura Al-Hujurat No. 49, verse 12 which says:

"...and find not fault with your own selves...".

And that its emphasis is put on 'the believers, men and women' shows that Faith is a quality that can prevent evil thinking and suspicions.

Up to now those believers were spiritually and morally reprimanded and rebuked, because on the whole it was not its time for the believers to be silent against that evil calumny or to be puppet of benighted rumourmongers.

Then, in this verse the subject is judicially paid attention, where it says:

"Why did they not bring four witnesses about it? But since they have not brought witnesses, they are liars before Allah."

This reprimand shows that the commandment of producing four witnesses as well as 'Qathf punishment', if witnesses are not produced, had been revealed before the verses of 'Ifck'.

But, why the Prophet (S) did not proceed to carry out this prescribed punishment is clearly answered. If people do not cooperate, the execution of such an affair is not possible, because tribal bigoted relationships sometimes make negative resistances to be temporarily brought about against carrying out

some judgments. This event, as the history indicates, happened in the same way.

Finally, all these reprimands are concluded in the next holy verse, when it says:

"And had it not been Allah's and grace His mercy on you in the world and the Hereafter, a grievous chastisement would certainly have touched you on account of the discourse which you entered into."

With regard to the matter that the Qur'anic word /'afadtum/is derived from the word /'ifadah/, meaning pouring water out increasingly, and it is also sometimes used to mean sinking into water, it is understood froni this phrase that the rumour of such a calumny spread so much that it also enveloped all believers.

Sura An-Nur - Verses 15-18

إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُم مَا لَيْسَ لَكُم بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّناً وَهُوَ عِندَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ

وَلَوْلآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُم مَّا يَكُونُ لَنَآ أَن نَّتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ

يَعِظُكُمُ اللَّهُ أَن تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَداً إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

وَيُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

15. "When you received it with your tongues, and uttered with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, and you counted it a trifle; while in the sight of Allah it is very great."
16. "And why did you not, when you heard it, say: 'It is not right of us to speak of this: glory be to You (O' Lord)! This is a great calumny'?"
17. "Allah admonishes you that you should never repeat the like of it for ever, if you are (true) believers."
18. "And Allah makes clear to you the signs: and Allah is knowing, Wise."

As a matter of fact this holy verse explains the previous discussion that how they were carelessly involved in this great sin. It implies that you may remember the time when you welcomed this great lie and you used to receive this rumour from the tongues of each other; and you used to utter something with your mouths that you had not any knowledge about it.

You considered it a tiny thing while it is very great with Allah.

The verse says:

“When you received it with your tongues, and uttered with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, and you counted it a trifle; while in the sight of Allah it is very great.”

Actually this verse refers to their 3 great sins that were related to the affair:

First, they embraced and admitted this rumour by taking it from the tongues of each other.

Second, they spread this rumour and recited it for others, while they were not certain of it.

Third, they regarded it as an easy trifle act. It was not only about the reputation and honour of two Muslims, but also it involved the reputation of the Islamic society (thinking too little of rumour and using it as an amusing tool).

It is interesting that in one place the phrase

(***“…with your tongues…”***)

is used and in another place the phrase

(***“…with your mouths…”***)

is used. Although all words are uttered through tongue and mouth, the verse refers to the matter that neither their admission nor their distribution of this rumour was based on any reason. They only fell back on words that were nonsense, baseless and resulted from the movement of the tongue and the mouth.

Sines this event was a very important incident but a group of Muslims had considered it trifle, it is again in this verse emphasized, and they are once more faced with reprimand and their souls are scourged more firmly.

It says:

“And why did you not, when you heard it, say: ‘It is not right of us to speak of this: glory be to You (O’ Lord)! This is a great calumny’?”

In fact they were rebuked, because they did not regard the accused ones with a good consideration, but here it is said that not only they must regard them good, but also they must not have expressed such a calumny, let alone they themselves proceed to spread it.

They must have got wondered at such a great calumny. They must have remembered the pureness of Allah and have sought refuge to Him for being not involved in spreading this rumour of calumny.

Nevertheless, they took it lightly by saying it is easy to do it, and they touched off it, and became the puppet of rumour-mongering and conspiring hypocrites.

We will, if Allah wills, discuss the importance of sinful rumour-mongering and its motivations and how to

struggle against it. We will also mention in detail some points in the commentary of later verses.

Since in the next verse the story of ''Ifk' is mentioned and the gloomy agonizing consequences of rumour-mongering and slandering reputation of pure persons are brought up, the Qur'an says:

"Allah admonishes you that you should never repeat the like of it for ever, if you are (true) believers."

If an individual does not go after such great sins, it means this individual is faithful. As a matter of fact the above verse outlines one of the principles of repentance, because merely being regretful of the past is not enough, and decision for not repeating it in the future must be taken, too.

To give caution that these words are not some common or usual ones and it is Allah, the All-Knowing and Wise, Who has stated this to make some great facts clear.

The next verse explains some crucial truths:

"And Allah makes clear to you the signs: and Allah is knowing, Wise."

Allah is aware of our needs, evil and good deeds as His knowledge demands and He modulates His commandments and ordinances to it as His Wisdom demands.

Some Points About Tongue

Tongue is the only limb that, because of speaking, does not ache and get tired during man's lifetime. Its form and size is small, but its crime and sin is great. There are many faithless persons who become Muslim and pure by saying one sentence (testifying that Allah is One and Unique).

And there are many Muslims who become faithless and impure by profaning Allah or denying religion ordinances. On one hand, tongue can bring peace and serenity by telling truth, repeating Allah's name, praying and advising others.

On the other hand, it can cause annoyance and resentment by irritating and biting others. Tongue is the key of intellect, the light of knowledge, and the simplest and the cheapest means of transmission of all sciences and experiments. Masters of ethics have written many books and papers about tongue.

Some Traditions On Tongue Maladies

1. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The salvation of the believer lies in controlling his tongue."[1]

2. Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

“One who does not keep his tongue does not protect his faith.”[2]

3. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Do not you get satisfied and pleased that you perform ritual prayers, pay amis-tax, and keep your tongue and then enter Paradise.”[3]

4. Ibn Abbas said:

“The Messenger of Allah (p.b.uJi.) once said: ‘May Allah bless one who keeps his tongue, knows circumstances of his era, and his way is a straight path’.”[4]

5. Imam Ali (as) said:

“The slip of the tongue is more painful than the harm of spearhead.”[5]

6. Imam Ali (as) said:

“The slip of the tongue is the severest perdition.”[6]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

“The worst person is the one of whose tongue people are afraid.”[7]

8. Imam Sadiq (as) narrated from his great father, Imam Sajjad Ali-ibn-il-Hussayn (as), who said that his father, Imam Ali (as), retold that the Prophet (S) said:

“Tongue will be so chastised that no other limb will be punished (in that way).

Then the tongue will say:

‘Oh Allah, you have punished me in a way that none of other limbs has been chastised so.’

Allah will say:

‘You, tongue, have uttered words that have reached east and west and because of that many honorable bloods have been shed, people’s properties are plundered, and people’s reputation is marred. I swear by My Glory that I punish you in a way that I have not chastised other limbs’.”[8]

9. Imam Ali (as) said:

“Hell-dwellers are inspire because of tongue, and the dead will merit and deserve light because of tongue. Then keep your tongue and make it busy with uttering Allah’s name.”[9]

10. Imam Ali (as) said:

*“The tongue is a beast of prey. If you release it, it attacks and bites.”*10

11. Imam Ali (as) said:

*“There are many persons whose tongue caused them annihilation.”*11

12. ’Abi Bakr said:

*“I heard the Prophet (S) said: ‘Verily most of man’s faults are caused by his tongue’.”*12

13. The Prophet (S) said:

*“Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand people are saved, and believer is the one to whom people can entrust their blood and properties.”*13

Sura An-Nur - Verses 19-20

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَن تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالاَخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لاَتَعْلَمُونَ

وَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

19. “Verily those who love that indecency should be spread concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter; and Allah knows, while you do not know.”
20. “And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, and Allah is Compassionate, Merciful, (you would have been chastised).”

Interest in spreading indecency is sometimes materialized by tongue and pen and sometimes by setting up some centers of abomination and wickedness, encouraging others to commit sin, and providing others with facilities for doing wrong action and committing sin.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“One who hears or sees something about a believer and retells it for others is among the examples of this verse.”*14

There is a tradition that says one who gives publicity to an evil action is like the one who commits it.15

Therefore in this verse, for leaving no doubt, the words are changed from expressing a private phenomenon into statement of a general and comprehensive rule.

It says:

“Verily those who love that indecency should be spread concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter…”

It is worth-studying that the verse does not say: those who spread indecency, but it says:

“Verily those who love that indecency should be spread, ”

and this is the ultimate emphasis on this field.

In other words, it says it must not be thought that such insistence and emphasis is just for the sake that the wife of the Prophet (S), or someone as important as her, is accused, but if such a thing happens to anyone and to every faithful person, this emphasis and insistence will be applied to that person, because other aspects will be added to it.

By the way, we must pay careful attention to the fact that spreading indecency is not allocated to only spreading false baseless accusation of a faithful man and woman and to accuse them of an unchaste action.

This is one of its examples and it is not limited to it. This phrase has got a wider concept that involves every kind of dissemination of corruption, spreading indecency and giving help to its development.

Of course, in the holy Qur’an, the Arabic word /fahišah/, or /fahša/, is mostly applied to sexual deviations and obscenity in honour, (defilements of honour), but philologically, as Raqib says in the book Mufradat, ‘Fuhsh’, ‘Fahsha’, and ‘Fahishah’ refer to any behaviour and speech that the obscenity of it is very bad and great.

And, in the holy Qur’an, it is sometimes used in the same vast meaning, such as the verse which says:

“And those who shun the great sins and indecencies…”[16]

Thus, the extent of the concept of the verse gets completely clear.

But, the sentence

“…theirs will be a painful punishment in the world…”

may refer to religiously prescribed punishments, social reactions, and individual gloomy consequences that in this very world will catch those who commit these actions. Moreover, their deprivation from the right of testimony and their condemnation to disgrace and iniquity are also its other worldly signs.

The agonizing punishment of the Hereafter is Hell Fire, Divine wrath and fury, and not enjoying Allah’s bless.

At the end of the verse, it says:

“...and Allah knows, while you do not know.”

Allah is well aware of the gloomy consequences and fatal results of spreading indecency both in the world and the Hereafter, but we are not aware of its different dimensions.

He does know in whose heart the interest and love of committing this sin lies. He knows those who carry out this evil action under beguiling names, but we do not know them. He knows how to reveal His ordinances to prevent this wicked and indecent action.

In the last verse in question, that is the last verse which is about ‘Ifk’, ‘struggling with indecency’, and ‘Qathf, again emphasis is put on the fact that: Had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy unto you, and if Allah were not Clement, Merciful on you, He would have sent such a great and painful chastisement upon you in this world that your life could be ruined.

The verse says:

“And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, and Allah is Compassionate, Merciful, (***you would have been chastised***)***.”***

Pay Attention to Some Matters

1- What is Spreading Indecency?

Since man is a social creature, the great community in which he lives, from one point of view, is like his home and its enclosure are counted as that of his home. The pureness of society helps his pureness and its defilement helps his defilement. Consequently, Islam is against anything that pollutes the atmosphere of the society and severely struggles with anything that defiles it.

If we see that backbiting is severely struggled with in Islam, one of its philosophies is that backbiting divulges secret faults and dishonours society.

If we see that it is commanded to hide faults, one of its reasons is to prevent sin from being common and widespread.

We see that open and seen sin is more important than hidden and covered sin. It is so important that Imam Rida (as) says:

“One who disseminates sin is rejected and one who hides sin is divinely forgiven.”

If we see that in the above verses spreading indecency is severely reprimanded and condemned, is also because of this.

Essentially sin is like fire. When this fire is stirred in a part of society, it must be tried to put off the fire or at least to encircle it. But if we spread fire and move it from one part to the other part, fire will increase

and no one can control it.

Moreover, the importance of sin in the opinion of people and saving the superficial aspect of society are great bars against corruption. Spreading slander and sin and pretending wickedness unbar it, belittle the sin and make being involved in it easy.

The Holy Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

"One who disseminates a wickedness is like one who has first (committed and) established it."[17]

Also there is a tradition that says:

"One day a man came to Imam Musa Ibn Ja'far (as) and said:

'May I lay down my life for you! One of brothers retold me something about a religious brother, the thing which I disliked. I asked him (that religious brother), but he denied it, while some of trustworthy persons narrated this.'

Imam said:

'When something bad is told about your brother, do not believe your eye and ear. Even if 50 persons take oath that he has done it and he says he has not done it, accept him. Do not disseminate anything that causes him disgrace and slander in society. If you do it, you will be one of those about whom Allah says:

'Verily those who love that indecency should be spread concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter... [18]*'."*[19]

It is also necessary to mention that 'spreading indecency' has got different forms:

Sometimes there are centers that cause corruption and disseminate wickedness. Sometimes the case is in the form of providing people with means of sin, or encouraging people to commit wrong action.

Finally the result is being no more decent and modest and then they commit sin in public. All of these are examples of 'spreading indecency', because the concept of this phrase is vast and extensive.

2- The Calamity of Rumour-Mongering

Vamping and circulating false rumours is one of the main branches of conspirators' psychological warfare. When enemy cannot bring damage to the other party face to face, it resorts to spreading rumour.

In this way enemy worries public opinion and makes people self-busy, so people are diverted from their main and crucial issues.

Rumour vamping is one of the ruinous weapons to mar the reputation of pure and good persons and to scatter people who are around them.

In the concerning verses, according to the famous occasions of revelation, for weakening and marring the reputation of the Messenger of Allah (S), some hypocrites fabricated and circulated the most unfair rumour.

And, using a proper opportunity, they expressed doubts about pureness of some of the wives of the great Prophet of Islam (S). For a relatively long period, they upset Muslims so much that the real and steadfast believers twisted like the person who is bitten by a snake.

And then the divine revelation was sent down to help them and it castigated the hypocrites so much that others would take lessen.

Though in societies in which there is political repression, spreading rumour is considered a kind of campaigning, other motivations such as retaliation, settlement of personal accounts, ruining public trust, marring some great persons' notability, and deviating people from thinking about political issues are also counted as the main factors of mongering rumour.

This is not enough for us to know what motivation is the cause of fabricating rumour, but it is important to give warning to people to avoid being puppet of rumour-fabricators and the factor of its circulation, and so they do not get the means of society destruction provided.

People must be aware that when they hear a rumour, they must bury it immediately; otherwise we have made the enemy happy and successful. Moreover, we will be imposed with painful punishment of the world and the Hereafter, which has been mentioned in the above verses.

3- Sin Should Not Be Counted Trifle

One of the issues that were reprimanded in the above verses was that people commit a sin, such as spreading calumny and slander, while they consider it rather little.

Verily belittling sin is itself one of the sins.

A person who commits a sin, and then magnifies it and is upset by his action, tries to repent and make amends, but a person who belittles sin and even sometimes he says:

"How blessed I am, because I have only committed this sin",

is in a dangerous path and still he continues his sin.

Thus, Imam Ali (as) in a tradition said:

"The severest sin is the sin whose committer considers it light."[20]

1. 'Usul-i-Kafi, No. 3, p. 178
2. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 2, p. 744
3. Al-Mahasin ul-Barqi, p. 166
4. Kanz ul-'A'mal, Vol. 6, p. 553
5. Nasikh ut-Tawarikh, Vol. 6, p. 205
6. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 1, p. 428
7. Bihar, Vol. 72, p. 281
8. Mostadrak ul-Wasa'il, Vol. 3, p. 174 & Wasa'il, Vol. 18, p. 10
9. Tuhaf ul-'Uqul, p. 118
10. Nahj ul-Balaqah, p. 1115
11. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 2, p. 550
12. 'Ihyae 'Ulum, Vol. 3, p. 110
13. Sonane Nisa'i, Vol. 8, p. 105
14. Kanz ud-Daqa'iq, the Commentary
15. Ibid
16. Sura Ash-Shura, No. 42, verse 37
17. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, Chapter 'At-Ta'bir'
18. Of course there are some exceptions including testimony in court or some cases of prohibition of doing evils which necessitates divulging what wicked things a person has done.
19. Thawab ul-A'amal, narrated from Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 2, p. 582
20. Nahj ul-Balaqah, Aphorisms, No. 328

Section 3: Slandering Chaste Women

Sura An-Nur - Verse 21

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لاَ تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَن يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنكَرِ وَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَي مِنكُم مِن أَحَدٍ أَبَداً وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَآءُ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

21. "O you who believe! Do not follow the steps of the Satan. And whoever follows the steps of the Satan, then verily he commands indecency and wrong. Had it not been Allah's grace and His mercy on you, not one of you would have ever been pure. But Allah purifies whom He pleases; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

The Arabic word /xutuwat/ is the plural form of the word /xutwat/ that means 'step'. The holy Qur'an has used the phrase /xutuwatiš šaytan/ ('the footsteps of the Satan') when it is the matter of calumny and lust, in order to indicate that Satan encourages man step by step to do some sins.

Though these verses do not follow the subject of 'Ifk, they complete the content of that matter. It is a warning for all believers that evil thoughts and deeds sometimes penetrate gradually and invisibly.

If they are not controlled and hindered in their first steps, man will get alerted when the die is cast. Thus when the first temptations of spreading lewdness or any sin get manifest, they must be immediately withstood, so that defilement does not get prevalent.

In the first verse, addressing the believers, it says:

"O you who believe! Do not follow the steps of the Satan. And whoever follows the steps of the Satan, then verily he commands indecency and wrong..."

If 'Shaytan' is interpreted into the vast meaning of the word, as any 'ruinous, felonious, cunning creature', the extensiveness of this warning in all dimensions of life becomes clear.

A pure and faithful man can never be all of a sudden involved in corruption, but it is done step by step:

First step: hobnobbing and getting familiar with wicked persons

Second step: attending their parties

Third step: thought of sin

Fourth step: committing questionable examples and errors

Fifth step: committing lesser sins

Finally he will do the worst sins and he is just like a person on whom an offender's yoke is laid and the offender leads him to precipice step by step, so that he falls down and will be ruined. Yes, these are 'the footsteps of the Satan'.[1]

Then the verse refers to one of the most important Divine favours and blessings which are bestowed on man in the path of guidance.

It says:

"...Had it not been Allah's grace and His mercy on you, not one of you would have ever been pure. But Allah purifies whom He pleases; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Undoubtedly, Divine grace and bless rescue men from defilements, sins and deviations, because He has conferred, on one hand, the gift of intellect and, on the other hand, the grace of the existence of the Prophet (S) and ordinances that have been sent down by revelation.

Moreover, His special help, and supernatural aids that cover deserving, receptive, and apt men are the most important factors of purification and cleanness.

The Qur'anic holy phrase /manyaša'/, as we have said repeatedly, does not mean unreasonable will and desire, but Allah does not do any guidance and does not confer any grace, unless attempt and exertion

is carried out by servants. One who has decided to go this path and tries, Allah will hold his hands, saves him from devils' temptations and so leads him to the destination.

In other words, Divine grace and bless has sometime religious aspect, that has come forth through mission of prophets, revelation of heavenly books, legalization of ordinances, glad tidings and warnings.

And it is sometime genetic or inherent, that comes forth through Divine spiritual helps. The verses in question (out of indication of the sentence 'man yasha') mostly concern the second section.

Meanwhile, we must pay attention that the words 'Zakat' and 'Tazkiyah' originally mean 'to grow' and 'to cause to grow', but in most cases they have been applied in the sense of: 'to become clean' and 'to clean something'. They may have one root, because no growth and development occurs when evils and corruptions are not got rid of.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 22

وَلاَ يَأْتَلِ أُولُواْ الْفَضْلِ مِنكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَن يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلاَ تُحِبُّونَ أَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

22. "And let not those who possess dignity and ease among you swear against giving to the near of kin and the needy, and fugitives for the cause of Allah. And they should pardon and overlook. Do you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

The Arabic word /Safaha/ means to ignore, which is more important than forgiveness. Some have said that /safh/ is a forgiveness that is without rebuke and reproof.

Some commentators have narrated an occasion of revelation for this holy verse, which shows how this verse is related to the pervious verses.

They say that this holy verse was revealed about some Companions of the Prophet (S). After the event of 'Ifk, they took an oath to withdraw their financial helps from those who were involved in that event and spread this great calumny.

They decided to give them no generous succour, in anything. But this noble verse prevented them from this violation and harshness. It orders them to be forgiving and lenient.

This occasion of revelation has been quoted by Qurtabi in his commentary narrated from Ibn Abbas;and Dahhak, as well as the deceased Tabarsi, have narrated it from Ibn Abbas and other persons, and it is general.

But some Sunni commentators insist that this verse is revealed about Abu Bakr who terminated his

financial help to Mastah Ibn ’Athathah, his maternal aunt’s son or his sister’s son, who helped to the circulation of ’Ifk.

However all pronouns that are used in the verse are plural. This matter shows that a group of Muslims decided to put an end to their helps unto these wrongdoers, and this verse prohibited them from this decision.

Anyway, we know that the verses of Qur’an are not limited to occasion of revelation, and they involve all believers till Doomsday. The holy verse implicitly recommends Muslims not to be influenced by hot vehement feelings and they should not make rough and excessive decisions against wrongdoers’ errors and faults.

With regard to this occasion of revelation, we return to the commentary of the verse.

The holy Qur’an says:

“And let not those who possess dignity and ease among you swear against giving to the near of kin and the needy, and fugitives for the cause of Allah…”

This way of saying shows that a group of those who were involved in ’Ifk were from among the Emigrants in the way of Allah. They were deceived by hypocrites and because of their past records Allah did not allow them to be ostracized from Islamic society and He did not let the Muslims decide some horrible things about them that were more than the limit they deserved.

Meanwhile the Qur’anic holy phrase /la ya’til/ is whether derived from the word /’iliyyah/ (on the rhythm of /‘itiyyah/), meaning to take an oath, or from the word /‘alw/ (on the rhythm of ‘Dalw’), meaning to abandon and to shrink.

Thus, the verse, according to the first meaning, prohibits taking an oath to terminate such helps. And, according to the second meaning, the verse precludes withdrawal of such action.

Then to encourage Muslims to continue such good deeds, it adds:

“…And they should pardon and overlook…”

As we expect Allah’s forgiveness, we must not forget to forgive others. The verse continues saying:

“…Do you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”

It is interesting that, on one hand, the companions of ’Ifk were severely reprimanded, but, on the other hand, to prevent extremists from resorting to measures beyond the norm and to control their feelings, 3 sentences, each of which is more interesting and remarkable than the others, were used: first, it is ordered to be forgiving and condoning.

Then it says:

"…Do you not like that Allah should forgive you?…",

(so you must forgive). Finally, two of Allah's attributes that are 'Forgiving' and 'Merciful' are mentioned as an emphasis. It indicates that they could not be more legalistic than Allah's commandment. Allah, Who Himself has issued this judgment, is Forgiving and Merciful. He enjoined them not to terminate the helps, so what did they want to say?

Undoubtedly, all Muslims who were involved in 'Ifk affair did not have a before-hand scheme, but some pseudo-Muslim hypocrites set it and a group of deceived Muslims followed them. Certainly all of them were on the wrong side of the law and were guilty, but there were a lot of differences between these two groups. They could not be treated alike.

Anyway, the above-mentioned holy verses are today and tomorrow a great lesson for Muslims and all future generations; when some persons commit a sin or make a mistake we must not exceed in the limits of punishment. They must be excluded from Islamic society and must not be barred from helps so that they resort to enemy and become one of foes.

The above verses, in fact, portray the balance of Islamic repulsion and attraction; the verses of 'Ifk and the severe punishment of those who made false statements about people's wives compose the great power of repulsion. The verse in question, that mentions Allah's mercifulness, forgiveness, and clemency, represents the attraction!

Sura An-Nur - Verse 23

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لُعِنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

23. "Verily those who accuse chaste, believing women unaware (of evil), are cursed in this world and the Hereafter, and for them shall be a grievous chastisement, "

Of course unbelievers, murderers, advocates of illegitimate rulers, hypocrites, mischief-makers, polytheists, the arrogant, oppressors, liars, perjurers, and those who disclaim the Truth have been cursed in the Qur'an, but the curse of the world and the Hereafter along with great punishment, covers only those who stigmatize pure persons.

Imam Sadiq (as) considers this verse as evidence for the fact that unjust accusation of pure and chaste women is one of the great sins.2

Thus, in this verse the Qur'an returns to the issue of Qathf and accusing chaste faithful women of unchaste action, and it decisively says:

“Verily those who accuse chaste, believing women unaware (of evil), are cursed in this world and the Hereafter, and for them shall be a grievous chastisement, ”

In fact, three attributes are mentioned for these women. Each of these attributes is a reason for the importance of the oppression that is imposed on them through calumny.

These attributes are: ‘Mohsanat’ (‘virtuous women’), ‘Qafilat’ (‘far from and unaware (of any pollution)’), and ‘Mu’minat’ (‘believing women’). In this way it is indicated how oppressing and unfair is accusing these persons of inadmissible accusations and this action deserves a great punishment.[3]

By the way, the application of the Qur’anic word /qafilat/ is an interesting meaning. It specifies the ultimate of their pureness from any deviation and unchasteness. It means that they are so heedless of sexual defilements that as if they are not at all aware of it.

For sometimes the attitude of a person toward sin is in a way that thought of sin goes out of his mind, as if there were not existed at all such an action. This is the supreme grade of piety.

Another possibility is that the purpose of /qafilat/ is the women who are not aware of the unjust accusations attributed to them; therefore, they do not defend themselves.

So, this verse mentions a new matter about such accusations, because the pervious verses referred to the calumniators who could be recognized and then would be punished, but, here, the rumour-fabricators, who have hidden themselves from punishment and religiously prescribed punishment, are brought up.

The Qur’an implies that they should not think that by this action they can escape from the Divine punishment forever. Allah, the Almighty, curses them in the world and, in the Hereafter, they will have an awful chastisement.

With regard to the fact that the above verse is placed after the story of ’Ifk, and it seems that its revelation had some relation with this affair, but like, many verses that are sent down for a special case and their content is general, this verse is also not limited to a certain case.

It is strange that some commentators such as Fakhr-i-Razi, in his book: ‘Tafsir-i-Kabir’ and some others insist that the content of this verse is limited to calumniation of the Prophet (S)’s wives. They mainly equal this sin to paganism and consider the word /lu‘inu/ (cursed), mentioned in the verse, as reason for it.

Of course calumniation is a great sin and if it is about the wives of the Prophet (S), it is greater and more cardinal, yet it does not by itself bring paganism.

Thus, the Prophet (S) did not treat those who were involved in that affair as apostates, but, as we explained in the commentary of the holy successive verses, he recommended the Muslims to be being

merciful toward them and not to be excessively violent toward them, which is not consistent with paganism.

The word /la‘n/ is ‘being away from Allah’s bless’, which is applied to pagans and those who commit cardinal sins. Therefore, in the verses that are about the punishment of Qathf (in the ordinances of /li‘an/ (conjugal anathema)), the word /la‘n/ has been applied two times about liars.

In Islamic narrations, the word /la‘n/ (curse) is frequently applied to those who commit great sins. The tradition which says:

“Allah has cursed ten groups concerning wine...”[4]

is very famous.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 24

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

24. “On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet testify against them as to what they used to do.”

The issue of testimony of body’s limbs is many times brought up in the Qur’an. Therefore in this verse it specifies how this group of calumniators will appear in Allah’s great court.

It denotes that they will have an awful chastisement in Hereafter, when it says:

“On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet testify against them as to what they used to do.”

Their tongues will move, in spite of their reluctance, and they express the truth. These wrongdoers will confess their sin in spite of their willing when they see all Divine unquestionable evidences and reasons.

In spite of their inner willing, they will explicitly reveal everything, because they will see they can no longer disclaim. Their own hands and feet will also speak. According to the verses of the holy Qur’an, even their body’s skin will start talking. It seems that they have been voice recorders that have recorded man’s voices, and signs of sins are stored on them during lifetime.

Yes, on the Day of manifestation, all of these things will appear.

If we see that some of the verses of the holy Qur’an refer to the Day of Judgment and say,

“This day We seal up mouths, and hands speak out and feet bear witness as to what they used to earn”[5],

there will be no inconsistency with the concerned verse, because it is possible of first that tongues get disabled and other limbs testify and when testimony of hand and foot discovers truths and they say what they must say, then tongue moves and confesses the sins.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

*"This testimony of the limbs is not against the believers, but it is against someone whose punishment is inevitable."*6

Sura An-Nur - Verse 25

يَوْمَئِذٍ يُوَفِّيهِمُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ

25. "On that day Allah will pay them their just due, and they will know that Allah, He is the (very) Manifest Truth."

It is only in the Hereafter that retributions will be given in full.

The Arabic word /din/, mentioned in this holy verse means either retribution or religion. Therefore, the holy verse either implies that Allah fully pays people's retribution in hereafter, or that the real and true divine religion will be represented to people and all fantastic religion-founders will realize that Allah is the real deity Who is true, right, and obvious.7

Since full retribution cannot be materialized in this world for its limitations, for example, how we can in this world punish a pilot who has bombarded a city and has killed thousands of people. But there is no limitation in the Hereafter and a criminal can be burnt many times in the Hell and each time he will be alive again.

The verse says:

"On that day Allah will pay them their just due, and they will know that Allah, He is the (very) Manifest Truth."

If today, in this world, they doubt in the rightfulness of Allah, or they lead people astray, in the resurrection day the signs of Allah's magnificence, power, and rightfulness are so obvious that will make the most stubborn people confess.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 26

الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ أُوْلَئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَهُم مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

26. “Impure women are for impure men, and impure men for impure women. Good women are for good men, and good men are for good women; such are innocent of that which they say: For them is forgiveness and a bountiful provision.”

This verse propounds a general principle and it does not imply that if a man or a woman is good, his or her spouse necessarily is also good, forgiven and is one of the people of the Heaven. For the Holy Qur’an counts faith, piety, and good deed as the criterion, therefore, in spite of the fact that Noah and Lut (as) were pure and faithful, their spouses were evil and Hellish.

The Arabic word /tayyib/ means pleasant and nice. In the Qur’an this word has been used in description of property, offspring, discourse, city, spouse, food and sustenance, home, angle, tree, and greeting. Its contrary word is the Qur’anic term /xabi/ with the sense of: malicious and evil. It has also been used in description of property, man, spouse, speech, deed, and tree.

This verse can be interpreted in different ways:

1. With regard to the previous verses that were about chaste women and the affair of ’Ifk and with regard to the sentence:

“…such are innocent of that which they say…”,

the verse means that the evil words such as calumny and slander are appropriate for malicious people, and pure and nice words are suitable for pure persons.

2. It is possible that the purpose of the verse is intellectual, doctrinal, ethical conformity, so as to say that man and wife must be matching and soft-hued with each other. It means that every person naturally seeks an individual of the same wavelength. In other words, vile persons are after evil ones and on the contrary good persons are after good ones.

The verse says:

“Impure women are for impure men, and impure men for impure women. Good women are for good men, and good men are for good women…”

3. It is possible that the purpose of the verse is stating a religious ordinance, meaning that marriage of good persons with malicious ones is unlawful.

It is like the third verse of this Sura, which says:

“The fornicator shall not marry save a fornicatress or an idolatress…”.

Imam Baqir (as) in a tradition confirms this meaning, too.[8]

Therefore, the words ‘Khabithat’ and ‘Khabithun’ refer to women and men who are unchaste and, on the

contrary, the words ‘Tayyibat’ and ‘Tayyibun’ refer to chaste women and men, and the purpose of the verse is apparently this.9

In the end, the verse refers to the recent group that is pure men and women.

It is said:

“…such are innocent of that which they say…”

Therefore Divine pardon and forgiveness as well as valuable sustenance awaits them.

The verse concludes:

“…For them is forgiveness and a bountiful provision.”

1. We have discussed about the difference about ‘(lewdness) in decency’ and ‘abominable acts’ in the commentary of verse 90 from Sura An-Nahl, No. 16, p. 511
2. Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 9
3. Al-Mizan, Vol. 15, p. 122
4. Khisal, by Saduq, Chapter ‘Asharah
5. Sura ya-Sin, No. 36, verse 65
6. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, ’Usul-i-kafi, Vol.2 p. 32
7. Al-Mizan, the Commentary
8. Majma‘ ul-Bayan, and Wasa’il-ush-shi’ah, Vol. 14, p. 337
9. We read in the narrations concerning Nikah (marriage) that some of the companions of Imams sometimes asked about ‘KhabIthah’ and they were answered negatively. This itself shows that the word ‘khabithah’ refers to unchaste women, not evil ‘words’ or evil ‘deeds’.

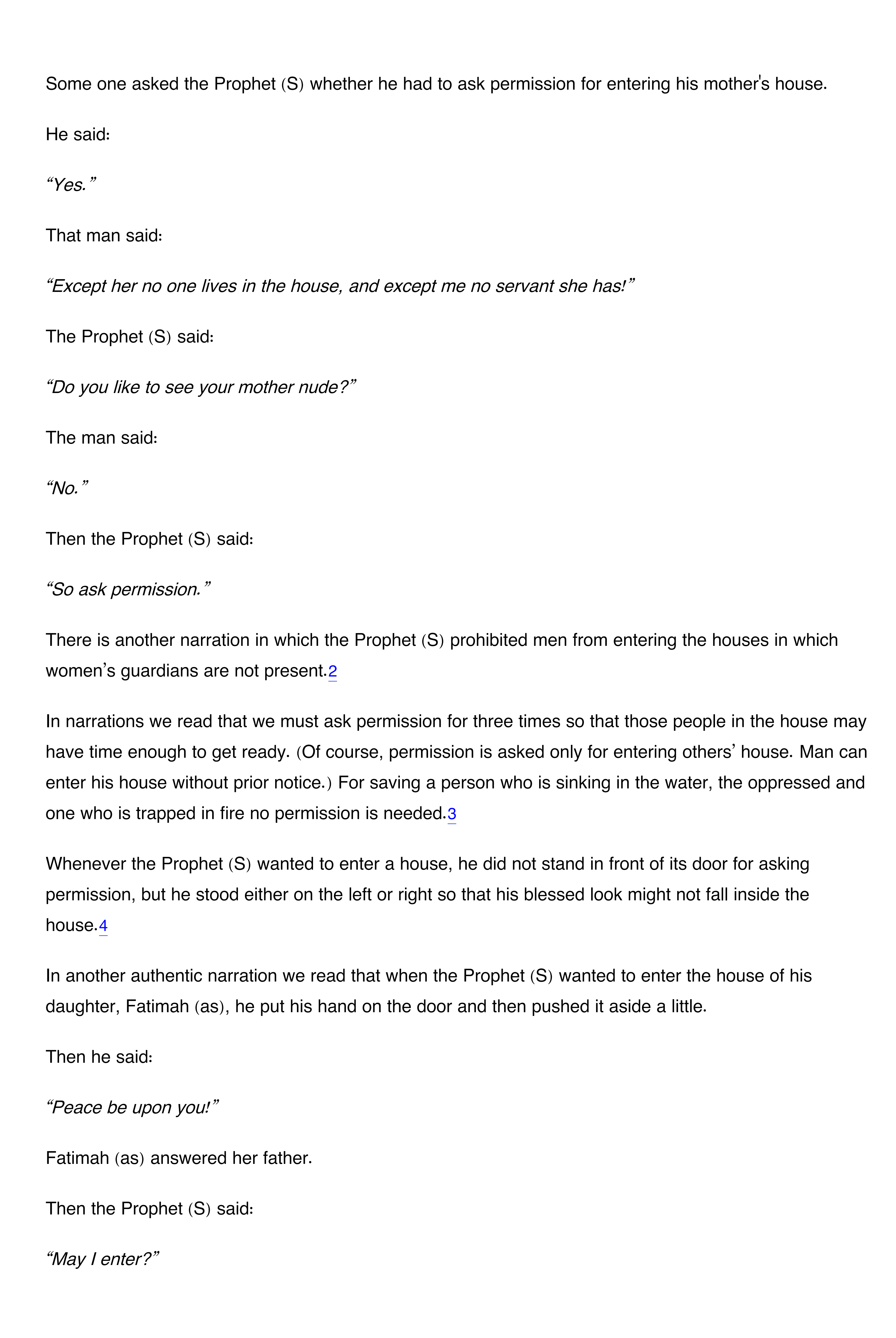
Section 4: Control and Regulation of Morals

Sura An-Nur - Verse 27

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لاَ تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتاً غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّي تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَي أَهْلِهَا ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

27. “O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and saluted those in them. That is better for you, so that you might be admonished.”

The Arabic word /’istinas/ means to ask permission and to declare one’s entrance or coming in. According to some Islamic narrations, entrance to a place can be stated by saying Allah’s name, or by footfall, or by greeting calling hello, and the like.1



Some one asked the Prophet (S) whether he had to ask permission for entering his mother's house.

He said:

“Yes.”

That man said:

“Except her no one lives in the house, and except me no servant she has!”

The Prophet (S) said:

“Do you like to see your mother nude?”

The man said:

“No.”

Then the Prophet (S) said:

“So ask permission.”

There is another narration in which the Prophet (S) prohibited men from entering the houses in which women’s guardians are not present.[2]

In narrations we read that we must ask permission for three times so that those people in the house may have time enough to get ready. (Of course, permission is asked only for entering others’ house. Man can enter his house without prior notice.) For saving a person who is sinking in the water, the oppressed and one who is trapped in fire no permission is needed.[3]

Whenever the Prophet (S) wanted to enter a house, he did not stand in front of its door for asking permission, but he stood either on the left or right so that his blessed look might not fall inside the house.[4]

In another authentic narration we read that when the Prophet (S) wanted to enter the house of his daughter, Fatimah (as), he put his hand on the door and then pushed it aside a little.

Then he said:

“Peace be upon you!”

Fatimah (as) answered her father.

Then the Prophet (S) said:

“May I enter?”

Fatimah (as) said:

“Yes, O’ Messenger of Allah (S)!”

The Prophet (S) said:

“May my companion enter the house, too?”

Then she said:

“I have no veil on my head.”

When she veiled herself in an Islamic way, the Prophet (S) made salutation again and Fatimah (as) answered. Again he (S) asked permission for himself. And after her agreement, he asked permission for his companion, Jabir Ibn ‘Abdullah.

This tradition shows well how exactly the noble Prophet (S), who was a paragon for common Muslims, observed these matters.

Even in some narrations we read that 3 times we must ask permission. The first time for hearing the voice of the person who asks permission. The second one is for getting ready. The third one lets the household to issue permission or not.

Even some say that some time must be passed between each time of getting permission so that if landlord has not worn a proper clothing, or he is in a state that he does not like anyone to see, or sometimes room is messed up, or there are some secrets in the house that must not be discovered, he may have time to get ready.

And if he does not give permission, we must leave him without getting upset.

Anyway, we must always withdraw anything that may violate modesty or reverence.

Thus in this noble verse, some of proprieties and social orders of Islam that have a very close relation with the issues of saving common chastity are stated, and that is how to enter people’s homes and how to ask permission for entrance.

The verse says:

“O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and saluted those in them…”

So, in this way the announcement of your decision to enter the house is expressed beforehand and the household’s agreement is always achieved.

It is interesting that, here, the Arabic phrase /tasta’nisu/ has been used, not the word ‘Tasta’ʔinu’,

because the second word only refers to asking permission, but the first word which is derived from the Arabic word /'uns/, implies a permission that is along with kindness, familiarity, and truthfulness.

It shows that even begging permission must be done politely, friendly and without any violation.

Thus if we split the sentence, many of customs that are related to this matter are summarized in it. It means not to cry, not to knock at the door hard, not to use harsh obscene words for begging permission, and also that when permission is given we must not enter the house without greeting, a salutation that is the sign of peace, tranquility, and messenger of kindness and friendship.

It is worth-studying that this ordinance, whose humane and sentimental aspect is clear, is accompanied with two sentences: /alikum xayrun lakum/

(***"That is better for you"***),

and /la'allakum taakkarun/

(***"...so that you might be admonished"***).

This way of statement indicates that such ordinances are rooted in humane sentiments, ration, and intellect. If man contemplates them, he will get aware that they are good for him.

The verse continues saying:

"...That is better for you, so that you might be admonished."

Anyway, purification and self-edification are achieved through observing people's rights and applying Islamic customs. When we want to enter common centers, we must remember Allah and we must know that Allah watches our thoughts and behaviour.

The Qur'an says:

"...and Allah knows what you proclaim reveal what you conceal."[5]

Sura An-Nur - Verse 28

فإن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَآ أَحَداً فَلاَ تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّي يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَإِن قِيلَ لَكُمُ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَي لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

28. "And if you find no one therein, still do not enter them until permission is given to you. And if it is said to you: 'Go back', then go back, for it is purer for you; and Allah is cognizant of what you do."

Entering people’s house needs permission, whether the giver of permission is its owner or he is some legal person.

Thus, in this holy verse, it says:

“And if you find no one therein, still do not enter them until permission is given to you…”

Maybe it implies that sometimes there are some persons at home, but someone who is in charge or someone who is the head of household is not present, in this case we are not allowed to enter the house.

Or there is not any person in the house. Or it is possible that the landlord is in neighbour’s home or is near to his house, so when he hears our voice or our knocking at the door, he comes and allows us to enter.

In this case we can enter the house. Anyway, what is important is that we can not enter a house without permission.

Then the verse continues saying:

“…And if it is said to you: Go back, then go back, for it is purer for you…”

It refers to the matter that we must not get upset because of a negative answer. Maybe the landlord is in a condition that he does get displeased if we see him in that way. Or his home or his room is not ready for receiving any guest.

Since when we hear a negative answer, we become curious to know its reason and so we start thinking of looking from some hole or eavesdropping in order to find out some secrets from the inside of the house; at the end of the verse, it says:

“…and Allah is cognizant of what you do.”

Sura An-Nur – Verse 29

لَّيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتاً غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ فِيهَا مَتَاعٌ لَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ

29. “ (It is) no sin for you that you enter uninhabited houses wherein you have some goods, and Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal.”

Public places that have no special inhabitants, such as: hotels, caravanserais, shops, and baths which are open to all and people can enter and enjoy their advantages, are treated differently than personal homes and require no permission for entrance.

Therefore, in view of the fact that each ordinance has some exceptions through which problems and difficulties are solved rationally, in this verse it says:

" (It is) no sin for you that you enter uninhabited houses wherein you have some goods..."

In the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"...and Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal."

The above phrase perhaps refers to this matter that some individuals may sometimes misuse this exception and enter uninhabited homes on the pretext of this ordinance to find out some secrets. Or they sometimes enter some inhabited houses on the excuse that they did not know they are inhabited.

But Allah (s.w.t.) is aware of all of these affairs and knows well about those who misuse. Thus, going to public centers while having no beneficial aim and only for wandering or meandering is often forbidden.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 30

قُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

30. "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their modesty. That is purer for them, verily Allah is All-Aware of what they do."

Occasion of Revelation

In Kafi book there is a narration by Imam Baqir (as) about the occasion of revelation of this noble verse. A young man of The Helpers met a woman on his way while her veil was put behind her ears (naturally some part of her neck and breast was visible).

The woman's face attracted the young man and he gazed at her and when the woman passed by him he was still looking at her while she was going her own way. Then he entered a narrow alley, and still he was looking behind himself, when suddenly his face hit against the wall and the sharp point of a bone, or a piece of glass, that existed in the wall cut his face!

Then the woman went away when the young man came to his senses and saw that blood was pouring forth from his face and his clothes and chest were stained with blood. He became very displeased. He said to himself:

"I take oath by Allah that I will go to the Prophet (S) and retell him this event."

When the Prophet (S) saw him, he asked the young man what the matter was. The man told him the event. At this time Gabriel, the harbinger of Allah's revelation, came down and brought the above verse.[6]

Sin must be prevented from its origin and piety must be set out from eyes. Immodesty and ogling prevent man's spiritual development to grow up.

We said before that this Sura is in fact the Sura of chastity and purification from sexual deviations. So its discussions, from this point of view, have a clear coherency. The verses in question mat state the ordinances of looking, ogling, and veil are also related to this matter. Moreover, the relation of this discussion to the discussions that are about accusations of immodesty is known to everyone.

At first, the verse implies that the believing men should be told to lower their gaze from a woman who is related within forbidden degrees and from what is illegal to look at, and be modest.

The verse says:

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their modesty…"

The Arabic word /yaquddu/ is derived from the word 'Qazz', which originally means to decrease or to lessen. In many cases it is used in the sense of: to lower voice or to lessen looking. Thus the verse does not say that the believers must close their eyes, but it says that they must lessen or shorten their looking.

This is a delicate way of speaking, because if a man really wants to close his eyes when he sees a woman who is related within forbidden degrees, he can no -longer walk, but if he casts down his gaze and does not look at her face and her body, it is as though he has shortened his gaze and has totally deleted the scene, that is forbidden, from the scope of his eyes.

It is worth-studying that the holy Qur'an does not specify the thing that a person must cast down gaze from (so as to say complement of the verb is omitted), in order that it will be a general rule; that is, one must cast down gaze from whatsoever is unlawful to look at.

But, with regard to the context of these verses, specially the following verse that mentions veil, it will be clear that it means not looking at women who are related within forbidden degrees (or are marriageable). The occasion of revelation, mentioned at the beginning, confirms this matter, too.

From what was said this matter is understood that the verse does not signify that men must not gaze or stare at women's face so that some people misuse it and say that not staring look is permitted.

However, its purpose is that when a man looks or sees, the scope of his vision is vast, and at the time of entering a woman who is related within forbidden degrees in the scope of his vision, he must cast down his look in a way that the woman exits the scope.

It means he does not look at her, but he must see his way and path; and that it is said that the word /qacld/ has been applied with the sense of 'to decrease' means the same.[7]

The second command that is mentioned in the verse is to guard ones modesty and to be modest.

The Arabic word /farj/ in fact means a split or opening between two things, but in such cases it connotes pudendum. In Persian language, is used instead of it, for keeping its–connotative meaning.

The purpose of 'being modest', according to Islamic narrations, is covering the pudendum for not to be seen by others.

In a tradition by Imam Sadiq (as) we read:

"Every verse of the holy Qur'an that mentions 'guarding modesty' indicates warding of fornication, except this verse that means keeping it from others' look."[8]

Since sometimes it comes to mind that why Islam has prohibited this action that is in line with one's lust and wish, at the end of the verse it is added:

"...That is purer for them..."

Then those who look at women flirtatiously, amorously and consciously, and sometimes they consider it unintentional, are warned:

"...verily Allah is All–Aware of what they do."

In other words, Allah is aware of whatever kind of manner they have; whether they look openly or secretly, or other forms.

A Few Traditions Upon Gaze

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"Whoever supplies his eyes with what is unlawful, in Hereafter his eyes will be filled with fire, unless he repents."[9]

2. We read in a tradition that all the eyes will shed tear in Hereafter, except 3 groups of eyes: the eyes that have shed tears out of Allah's fear, the eyes that are closed to sins, and the eyes that are open for the sake of Allah.[10]

3. Imam Ali (as) said:

"If your look is cast on a woman (who is related within forbidden degrees) for the first time, there will be no problem, but if your looking is continued, (there will be problem, because) it causes disorder and temptation."[11]

4. We read in a tradition[12] that the Prophet (S) said:

“Do not sit on the way of people!”

The audience said:

“We have no choice.”

The Prophet (S) said:

“Then honour what is true and right!”

They asked:

“What is the right?”

The Prophet (S) said:

“Withdrawal from ogling and bothering people, answering others’ salutation, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.”[13]

5. Hadrat ‘Isa (as) said:

“Withdraw from looking at women who are related within forbidden degrees, because it plants the seed of lust in the heart and only this is enough to get man involved in seduction or temptation.”[14]

6. Imam Ali (as) said:

“The eye drags the heart.”

“The eye is Satan’s trap or snare.”

(Guarding eyes is the best way for being away from lusts.)[15]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

“Evil look is one of Satan’s fatal arrows. Whoever closes his eyes for the awe of Allah, Allah will bestow him a faith that he feels its sweetness and taste in his inward.”[16]

8. Concerning permissible looking at a woman, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Looking at her face, palms, and front part of the feet is lawful (but purely and chastely).”[17]

9. The Prophet (S) said:

“Allah’s wrath is very severe against a married woman whose eyes are filled with individuals other than her husband (and persons related in forbidden degrees) (looking deliberately and lustfully at a man who is not related within forbidden degrees).

When she does so, Allah, Almighty and Glorious, rejects and nullifies all good deeds and worships she has done. When she lies with a person other than her husband, Allah has right to burn her after He chastises her in the purgatory world."[18]

10. The Prophet (S) said:

"A man who funs a woman who is not related to him in any form of marriage contract, Allah will confine him in chastisement for a thousand years for every word that he has jested her."[19]

11. The Prophet (S) said:

"One who dominates neighbor's house and looks at a man's pudendum or a woman's hair or part of their body will be rightly and definitely gathered by Allah with hypocrites who intended to look at women's covered limbs.

And until Allah Almighty defaces him in the world he will not leave this world. Allah also will divulge all his sins and faults in the Hereafter and disgrace him before other men (therein)."[20]

Sura An-Nur - Verse 31

وَقُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلاَ يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلاَّ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَي جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلاَ يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلاَّ لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ ءَابَآئِهِنَّ أَوْ ءَابَآءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَآئِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَآءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْإِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَآئِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُوْلِي الإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَي عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَآءِ وَلاَ يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِن زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَي اللَّهِ جَمِيعاً أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

31. "And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty, and do not display their adornment except that which is (ordinarily) apparent of it, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment save to their own husbands or their fathers or their husbands' fathers, or their sons or their husbands' sons, or their brothers or their brothers' sons or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess (their slaves), or the male attendants void of sexual stimulant, or the children who know naught of women's nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet (in walking) so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And turn unto Allah all together, O' believers, in order that you may succeed."

Allah has not mentioned the number of units (Rak'at) in ritual prayers and that of ritual circumambulation of the Ka'bah and has charged the Prophet (S) with the task of stating the amount and measure of alms-tax and many other issues, but Allah has paid attention to minimum issues of family, upbringing, and moral corruptions.

By using female pronoun 25 times in this verse, Allah has paid attention to women.[21]

Thus, in this verse, the women's duties and responsibilities are mentioned; first, it refers to the ones that are like the men's responsibilities and duties when it says:

"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty..."

Therefore ogling is forbidden to women as it is to men. As all men are obliged to veil their pudendum, all women are also obliged to veil their pudendum from the eye of other women and men.

Then in three sentences the issue of veil, which is the women's characteristics, is referred to:

1) "...and do not display their adornment except that which is (ordinarily) apparent of it..."

Upon the purpose of the adornment which women must not display, as well as the visible adornment which women are allowed to display, mentioned in the verse, commentators have stated different ideas.

Some of them say that hidden adornment is the very natural adornment (women's beautiful body), whereas the Arabic word /zinat/ has rarely been applied in this sense.

Most of commentators have considered it as the place of adornment, because the display of adornment itself such as ear-rings, bracelet, and armlet is not forbidden. But displaying where they are used such as ears, neck, arms and hands is forbidden.

Therefore, women totally are not allowed to display their adornments that are usually hidden, although their limbs are not shown. Consequently showing special ornate clothes that women wear under their usual clothes or veil (chador) is not permitted, because the holy Qur'an prohibits the display of such adornments either.

In many traditions narrated from Imams of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) we see the same matter that the interior adornment, in Arabic, is interpreted as 'Qalladah' (necklace), 'Dumlaj' (armlet), 'Khalkhal' (anklet).[22]

Moreover, since in many numerous Islamic narrations, the apparent adornment has been interpreted as ring, eyeliner, and so on, we see that the purpose of interior adornment is also the adornments that are hidden.

2) The second ordinance that is brought up in this verse is:

"...and to draw their veils over their bosoms..."

The Arabic word /xumur/ is the plural form of /ximar/, which originally means veil, but it is usually applied to the thing with which women veil their head (scarf).

The Arabic word /juyub/ is the plural form of the word /jayb/, that means the collar of a shirt which is rendered to the throat and it is sometimes applied to the upper part of the breast, because it is located near it.

It is understood from this verse that before the revelation of this verse, women wore their scarf in a way that they put their scarf behind their head so that their neck and a part of their breast were visible. The Holy Qur'an enjoined them to wear their scarf in a way that that part of their neck and breast that are visible to be veiled.

3) In the third ordinance both the cases in which women are allowed to unveil themselves and display their inward adornment are specified.

The verse says:

"...and not to reveal their adornment save to..."

They must not display their adornment except in twelve instances:

1. To their own husbands

(***"...their own husbands..."***)

2. To their fathers

(***"...or their fathers..."***)

3. To their husbands' fathers

(***"...or their husbands fathers..."***)

4. To their sons

(***"...or their sons..."***)

5.To their husbands' sons

(***"...or their husbands' sons..."***)

6. To their brothers

(***"...or their brothers..."***)

7. To their brothers' sons

(***"...or their brothers' sons..."***)

8. To their sisters' sons

(***"...or their sisters' sons..."***)

9. To their women

(*“…or their women…”*)

10. To their slaves

(*“…or those whom their right hands possess* (*their slaves*)*…”*)

11. To those who do not have desire for women

(*“…or the male attendants void of sexual stimulant…”*)

12. To kids who know nothing of pudendum

(*“…or the children who know naught of women’s nakedness…”*)

4) Finally the fourth ordinance is stated in this way, saying:

“…And let them not stamp their feet (***in walking***) ***so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment…”***

Women must be so exact and strict in observing chastity and avoiding affairs which kindle lust in men's heart and may cause deviation from the path of chastity that they must withdraw from letting strange men hear their anklet sound. This indicates how exact and precise Islam is in these affairs.

In the end of the verse, all the believers, irrespective of men and women, are invited to repent and return to Allah, where the Qur’an says:

“…And turn unto Allah all together, O’ believers, in order that you may succeed.”

If they have committed such sins, now that the facts of the ordinances of Islam are explained, they must repent their wrong actions and go to Allah for salvation and deliverance, because successfulness is found only with Him. On our way there are slippery slopes from which no one can be saved, and we must trust to Allah!

The Prophet (S) said about the commentary of the Qur’anic sentence: /’ilia libu‘ulatihinna/ (save to their own husbands):

“Allah has cursed those women who do not apply cosmetics to their hair and face for the sake of (*their*) *husband or do not fulfil what the husband demands.”*[23]

The Philosophy of Veil

1. Undoubtedly in our age, which some persons have called the age of sexual liberty and nudism and Western exponents who regard women’s promiscuity as part of women’s liberty, speaking about veil is

not welcomed by them and sometimes it is considered as legends of the past times!

But umpteen corruptions and increasing problems and difficulties that are caused by these unrestrained freedoms cause gradually some people to pay attention to such words.

The issue is that whether women (I ask your pardon) must be at the mercy of all men for abuses through various aural, visual, and physical means (save sexual intercourse), or they must be limited to their own husbands.

The question is that whether women must be engaged in a contest for showing their body and stirring men’s lust and defiled low desires or whether these issues must be removed from the society and be confined to family environment and the life of man and wife.

Islam is in support of the second plan and veil is part of this plan, while western-fascinated persons are in favour of the first plan.

Islam says that sexual gratifications, including sexual intercourse and physical, visual, aural relishing, are only limited to spouses. Anything other than that will defile and corrupt the society.

The sentence /a[illegible]ka lahum/:

“...That is purer for them...”,

mentioned in the previous verse, refers to this matter.

The philosophy of veil is not something hidden and invisible, because:

A) Women’s nakedness that naturally has the consequences such as: applying cosmetics, coquettishness and the like, sets men, specially young ones, in a state of continual temptation (always tempts them), and that subjects them to tension and stress.

It causes nervous diseased excitements and sometimes it is the source of psychological abnormalities. How much can human bear such excitements? Do not all psychotherapists say that continual excitement is the cause of illness?

We must specially pay attention to this fact that sexual instinct is man’s most powerful and deepest instinct and in the course of history it has sowed the seeds of fatal events and gruesome crimes and so it is said:

“No important event there is save a woman plays a role in it!”

Is not it playing with dynamite to stir this instinct through showing naked women? Is it a rational job?

Islam wants Muslim men and women to have a calm psyche, a sound nerve, and pure eye and ear. This

is one of the philosophies of veil.

B) The documented figures show that divorce and separation in spousal relationships has constantly increased with the increase of nakedness in the world, because whatever eye sees heart often desires it. And whatever heart, that is unrestrained low desires, wants man pursues it at any price it may be, and so every day he is after one woman and says goodbye to the other one.

In a community that vile exists (and other Islamic conditions are observed) two spouses belong to each other and their sentiments, love and feelings are limited to each other.

However, in 'the open market of nakedness' in which women have been practically turned into common products (at least at the level of non-sexual intercourse), sacredness of marriage contract is no longer meaningful, and families will be quickly and easily destroyed, like spider web, and children will be without guardian.

C) Spreading indecency and the increase of illegitimate children are the sorest consequences of unveiling, which do not need any statistics and figures, we think. Its reasons are especially so fully visible in western countries that they need no explanation.

We do not say that the main factor of indecency and illegitimate children is only unveiling. We do not say that shameful colonialism and destructive political issues are not playing role in it, but we say that one of its most influential factors is nakedness and unveiling.

With regard to the fact that 'indecency' and worse than that 'illegitimate children' have been and are the source of kinds of crimes in human societies, the perilous dimensions of this issue will be made clearer.

D) The issue of 'woman's meanness' and her degradation is very important after all, which does not need statistics and figures, too. When society desires nakedness of woman, it is natural that every day it demands her more make-up and more ostentation and display.

When woman is used as a means for attracting tourists and sight-seers in waiting rooms and shops, because she is physically beautiful and attracting, woman's personality is degraded to a doll or a valueless product and her high humane values are totally forgotten.

And her only pride is her youth, beauty and display. Thus, she turns into a means for satisfying unrestrained desires of some wicked, deceiving, beastly men.

How can a woman with her moral characteristics achieve high status and show her knowledge in such a society?

It is really sorrowful that, in western countries and western-influenced countries, lewd and promiscuous women are most famous and acquire the highest earning and every thing is in favour of them, who are known as artist and actress.

Wherever they go, they are welcomed by organizers of defiled places, in which people fall over themselves for them. We had, of course, such a situation in Iran before Islamic Revolution.

We thank Allah that it is wound up in Iran and woman is changed from being just a doll, worthless product and wickedness into a personality who has found her status again. She veils herself, but she is not isolated from society. She has participated in all good and edifying activities and even in the holy defense she has appeared with veil.

This was a part of clear philosophies of veil in Islam, the philosophies that are appropriate to our discussion.

2. The commentary of the Qur'anic sentence: ***/'ulil 'irbat–i–min–ar–rijal/*** (the male attendants void of sexual stimulant).

The Arabic word /'irbah/ is derived from the word /'arab/. As Raqib says in Mufradat: It means desperate need that man finds ways to gratify it. And it is sometime used as absolute need.

The purpose of the phrase /'ulil 'irbat–i–min–ar–rijal/ here is those persons who have sexual desire and need spouse. Therefore the Qur'anic phrase /qayr–i–'ulil 'irbah/ includes the ones who do not have such desire.

That to whom this sentence refers, is a matter of discussion between commentators:

Some of them say that it refers to the old men who have sexual desire no longer, such as /'al–qawa'idu min–an–nisa'/ (the women who are unsexed or the women who are beyond the conventional age for marrying).

Some other commentators say it refers to men who are castrated.

And some commentators say that its purpose is those who are neuter, that is: they have no sex organ at all.

However, what must be emphasized and it is mentioned in some valid traditions by Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) is that the purpose of this sentence is those insane men who have no sexual desire at all. These men are usually hired to do simple jobs and work as servants. The application of the Arabic word /'at–tabi'in/ also strengthens this meaning.[24]

Since this quality, that is the quality of the lack of sexual desire, is correct about a group of old men, it is possible that this verse can include such old men. Imam Kadhem (as) emphasized such group of old men in a tradition.

However, the verse does not imply that such men are like those who are unmarriageable. It is certain that veiling some part of head or some part of hand, and the like, before such men is not compulsory.

3. Which children are the exceptions of this ordinance?

We said that the 12th group before whom veil is not compulsory is children who have not yet enjoyed sexual desire.

The Qur'anic sentence /lam yazharu/ has sometimes been interpreted as /lam yatta li'u/ (are not aware), and sometimes as /lam yaqdiru/ (are not able), because this word has been used in both meanings and in the Holy Qur'an it is sometimes used to mean this and sometimes to mean that.

For example, in Sura Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 20 we read:

"...if they prevail against you, they, will stone you..."

And in verse 8 from Sura At-Taubah we recite:

"How (can be?) For if they prevail against you, they will observe towards you neither ties of relationship nor treaty..."

However this differentiation in the concerned holy verse has no significant influence on the conclusion of discussion. Its purpose is children who are neither perceptive nor potent because of lack of sexual desire.

Therefore ladies must veil themselves before those children who have reached an age in which such a desire and ability is dully developed.

4. Every kind of tempting factor is forbidden!

The last matter is that at the end of this verse the Qur'an implies that women should not walk in a manner that the sound of their anklet can be heard. This shows that Islam is so exact and fastidious in the issues concerning common chastity that even such a thing is not allowed.

Of course a fortiori, things that set youths' lust on fire, such as circulation of tempting pictures, blue movies, sexy novels and stories, are not permitted. Undoubtedly Islamic society must be free from such matters that lead people, girls and boys, to centers of corruption and wickedness.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 32

وَأَنكِحُوا الأَيَامَي مِنكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَآئِكُمْ إِن يَكُونُوا فُقَرَآءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

32. "And marry those among you who are single and the righteous among your servants, male or female. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His grace, and surely Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing."

Marriage is venerated and emphasized in Islam. Islamic society is responsible for marrying off those who are celibate. Parents who do not marry their offspring are partner in sin that their issues commit.

Thus, from the beginning of the Sura up to here various calculated ways have been brought up for preventing sexual defilements, the ways each of which are playing an influential role in preventing or struggling against these defilements.

In this verse, one of the most important ways of struggling against wickedness that is simple, easy, sincere, friendly marriage, is mentioned. Because it is obvious that in order to wind up the issue of sin the approach of satisfying and gratifying the instincts is applied. In other words, no 'negative struggling' is successful without 'positive struggling'.

Therefore, in this verse the Qur'an says:

"And marry those among you who are single and the righteous among your servants, male or female..."

The Arabic word /'ayama/ is the plural form of /'ayyim/, which originally means a woman who has no husband. Then it has also been applied to man who has no wife. Thus, the totality of all unmarried men and women, whether they are virgin or widower or widow, are included in this verse.

Although marriage is an optional affair and depends on the will of two parties, the general idea that is derived from the word /'ankihu/ (marry) is to prepare preliminaries of marriage by giving financial aids if necessary, finding a proper spouse, encouraging others to get married, and finally mediating for solving problems that will not be settled without intercession of others.

Summarily the concept of the verse is so extensive that it includes every word or action which is for this sake.

Without doubt, the principle of Islamic cooperation necessitates Muslims to help each other in all cases and fields, but emphasizing on this matter which is specified in marriage is for the reason that marriage is specially important.

This is so important that Imam Ali (as) in a tradition said:

"The best intercession is to mediate between two persons for the sake of marriage so that they get married."[25]

In a tradition by Imam Kazem Musa Ibn Ja'far (as) we read:

"There are three groups who are under protection of Allah's Throne in the Day of Resurrection, the day in which no protection exists save Allah's: the man who prepares the preliminaries of his Muslim bother's marriage; those who help another Muslim who needs help; those who hide other Muslim brother's

secrets."[26]

The Prophet (S) said:

"For each step one takes and each word one says in this way the reward of one year worshiping that in its nights the one establishes prayers and in its days he fasts, will be recorded in one's book of deeds."[27]

Since an almost public pretext for escaping marriage is poverty and not being financially supported, the holy Qur'an answers them and implies that you should not be afraid of their poverty; because, as the verse says:

"…If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His grace, and surely Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing."

And Allah is powerful to do such a thing, because He is so omnipotent that His power covers the entire universe and He is so omniscient that He is aware of every one's intentions; especially He is aware of the intention of those who decide to get married in order to save chastity and virginity. He blesses and favours all such ones.

Therefore, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Life will be prosperous by getting married."

Again Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"One who does not get married for fear of poverty is suspicious of Allah."

And the same Imam (as) said:

"Two unit (rak'at) prayers performed by a person who is married is better than 70 unit (rak'at) prayers which is performed by a person who is not married."[28]

There is a famous tradition by the Prophet (S) who said:

"Get married so that generations will be increased, because in the Day of Resurrection I will be glorified before other nations with increase of your population even with aborted children."[29]

In another tradition by the Prophet (S) we read:

"One who gets married has saved one half of his religion and must protect the other half."[30]

The Prophet (S) said:

"The worst of you is the one who is unmarried."[31]

The Prophet (S) said:

*“After Islam no favour and blessing is better than having a Muslim wife and spouse, because when he looks at her he will be happy and when he enjoins her she obeys and when he is absent she protects his property and reputation.”*32

The Prophet (S) in a tradition said:

*“Marry virgin girls because their mouth is sweet and charming and their uterus is more proper and they learn soon and their kindness is more stable.”*33

Sura An-Nur – Verse 33

وَلْيَسْتَعْفِفِ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحاً حَتَّي يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْراً وءَاتُوهُم مِّن مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي ءَاتَاكُمْ وَلاَ تُكْرِهُوا فَتَيَاتِكُمْ عَلَي الْبِغَآءِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّناً لِتَبْتَغُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَن يُكْرِههُّنَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِن بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

33. “And let those who do not find the means to marry keep** (**themselves**) **chaste until Allah enriches them out of His grace. And those of your slaves who seek a writing** (**of emancipation**)**, write it for them if you know any good in them, and give them of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you; and do not compel your slave girls to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that you may make a gain in the life of the world; and whoever compels them, then** (**unto them**)**, verily after their compulsion, Allah will be Forgiving, Merciful.”

Not having spouse will not give someone permission to commit sin, so one must be patient and chaste. In order to save public chastity and purity, both the youth must try to save themselves and government must get down at it and the rich must embark on it.

“…and give them of the wealth of Allah…”

Of course, authorities of the society and the rich must be first recommended to do something, and then unmarried individuals must be advised to be chaste and pure.

But since in spite of all attempts and endeavours carried out by individuals and others, marriage does not take place and one has to, willingly or unwillingly, remain single for a length of time, so this person must not think that he is permitted to be sexually defiled. Therefore in this holy verse the command of purity is issued though observing it may be difficult for them.

It says:

“And let those who do not find the means to marry keep** (**themselves**) **chaste until Allah enriches

them out of His grace..."

In this crucial and trial phase the unmarried ones should not get involved in this defilement and exempt ones' selves, because no excuse is accepted, but the power of faith, personality, and piety must be tested in this phase.

Today the issue of marriage gets so complicated that it is turned into an arduous or impassable path because of wrong customs and even superstitions, yet marriage is, regardless of all these manly-added things, an innate matter and in line with the rule of creation.

Man needs a sound and healthy marriage for continuation of human generation, for tranquility of psyche and body, and for solving problems of life. And man must protect himself from any kind of pollution.

Then, in view of the fact that in any occasion that slaves are mentioned, Islam pays a special attention to their freedom, the verse turns from the discussion of marriage to the discussion of manumitting and freeing slaves, which is done through 'Mukatibah' (entering a written contract in which slaves work and pay their employer some money by installment and then they will be free).

It says:

"...And those of your slaves who seek a writing (of emancipation), write it for them if you know any good in them..."

The purpose of the Qur'anic sentence /'alimtum fihim xayran/ (if you know any good in them) is that they (slaves) must have grown enough and be competent enough to carry out such a contract.

They must be able to live independently when the amount of money they promised to pay is shelled out completely. But if they cannot do it and on the whole this matter causes them losses and consequently they will be a burden to society, this matter should be delayed until the time that they are competent and able.

Then, in order to make no trouble for slaves when they pay this money by installment, it is said:

"...and give them of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you..."

Commentators have different opinions upon the purpose of this 'wealth' that must be given to slaves:

Many commentators say: its purpose is to pay them a part of alms-tax, as it is said in verse 60 of Sura At-Taubah, so that they can pay their debt and then be free.

Some others say: its purpose is that the owner of the slave spares some of the debt and if he has received it he returns it to them so that they can afford more to get freed from slavery.

Another possibility is that at the beginning when slaves begin working and they do not have financial

means, the owner must give them subsidy or some capital so that they can start a business and can manage their life and carry out their installments both.

Of course the above three comments are not inconsistent and it is possible that all of them to be included in the concept of the verse. The real purpose is to get Muslims help this poor and oppressed group so that they get freed sooner.

It is clear, of course, that the matter of slavery is a social phenomenon, which was prevalent before Islam and Islam did not develop it. Therefore Islam not only does not approve it, but also it sets various ways and methods to limit this phenomenon and wipe out this evil tree.

Islam first struggled against the interests of slavery. In the old times if a debtor could not afford his debts, he would become the salve of the leaner. Islam barred this approach. In old times defeated soldiers became the salves of victorious army.

Islam freed those who were defeated in the Battle of Badr on the condition of teaching those who were illiterates and also Islam freed some through paying compensation. Then Islam paved grounds in Islamic society to make the path of getting free for slaves.

One of the uses of alms–tax is buying and freeing slaves. In Islam, if an owner wounds his slave, that salve is free. Breaking fast, accidental homicide and failing in performing an oath must be atoned and it is possible that a person frees some slaves as atonement.

One of the ways is 'Mukatibah' that is recommended in the above verse and it is advised that if there is some good in slave you may free him.Possibly this is its purpose that if there is benefit for the slave to be free you must answer his request positively.

There happen many times that this freedom is not good for him, and maybe it is because of this that Islam has struggled with slavery gradually.

The Arabic word 'Mukatibah' is derived from the word 'Kitabat' and the word 'Kitabat' is derived from the Arabic word 'Kataba', which means to gather. The act of writing in Arabic called 'Kitabat' because alphabets and words are gathered in a phrase.

And since in 'Mukatibah' a contract is usually written between the owner and a slave, it is called 'Mukatibah'. Contractual enfranchisement is a contract that is between these two persons; wherein the slave is obliged to obtain some money through free business and pay to his owner by installment and so regains his freedom.

The payment must be in a way that the slave can afford. And it has been commanded that the sum of these successive payments must not be more than the value of the slave.

And if the slave cannot pay his debts for some reasons, his debts must be paid by allocating a part of

ahns-tax (Zakat) as well as through Muslim public treasury. Even some Islamic jurists specify that if the owner is to pay alms-tax, he himself must substitute his slave's debts for his ahns-tax that is to be paid.

Moreover, if Muslims are the victorious party of a war and take war prisoners, there are some different choices to treat these prisoners:

1 . To free all prisoners at once and in this case war begins again.

2 . To kill all of them and that is the sign of Muslims' cruelty.

3 . To set up a camp for them and sustain them by using Muslim public treasury. In this way innocent people must pay the expense of the wrongdoers.

4. To sent them among Muslims so that they view Islam and Muslims morals. In this way they may gradually be influenced and become Muslim, and then we free them through various ways. This plan is the best and Islam's plan is the same.

Let us pass this matter, for the system of war was in this way at that time, that a prisoner was used as a slave and Islam reciprocated it. As today prisoners are kept in camps and we also must observe international rules of war to the extent that these rules are consistent with our religion.

Then one of the evil acts of some worldly persons toward slaves is mentioned in the verse, where it says:

"...and do not compel your slave girls to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that you may make a gain in the life of the world..."

Some of commentators have said about the occasion of revelation of this phrase: Abdullah Ibn 'Ubayy had six salve girls. He compelled them to sell their honour for earning money for him.

When the ordinance of Islam about struggling against unchaste acts (in this Sura) was issued, the slave girls came to the Prophet (S) and complained about this matter. Then, at this time, the above verse was revealed and prohibited this action.[34]

This verse shows that people were so much involved in immoral corruption and deviation in the Age of Ignorance that even after the advent of Islam some people used to continue their previous acts.

This status existed until the time when this verse was sent down and put an end to this condition. But unfortunately in our age, in some countries (that they advocate civilization and human rights,) this action is seen very easily.

Even in our country, when the previous regime was ruling, this matter was carried out terribly, where the innocent girls and ignorant women were deceived and led to the centers of wickedness, and they were forced to be unchaste by means of devilish schemes. They could not escape at all. In this way a lot of

money was earned and explanation of this poignant matter cannot be done here.

Slavery does not apparently exist as before but, in this so-called civilized world, some crimes are committed which are worse than the age of slavery. May Allah save the people of the world from these pseudo-civilized men! We thank Allah that such shameful crimes have considerably been wound up in Iran after Islamic Revolution.

It is necessary to mention that the purpose of the Qur'anic sentence: /'in aradna tahassunan/

"...when they desire chastity..."

is not that if women themselves would like to do this evil act, there is no problem to force them. When there is compulsion to do something, willingness to do it is not meaningful. Reluctance is true when there is lack of willing or tendency, otherwise, being unchaste and encouraging others to be unchaste is a great sin, anyway.

This sentence is for the fact that if the owners of these salve girls had a little jealousy, their jealousy would be hurt. The concept of this verse is that these slave girls who were apparently at a lower social level would not like to be unchaste, why did they go along with this wickedness?

At the end of the verse, as it is the approach of the Holy Qur'an, the path of return is not closed to wrongdoers and they are encouraged to go back, repent and atone.

It continues saying:

"...and whoever compels them, then* (*unto them*)*, verily after their compulsion, Allah will be Forgiving, Merciful."

As we said before, this sentence may refer to the condition of the salve girls' owners who were penitent for their gloomy and evil past and they were ready to do repentance and edify themselves. Or it refers to the women who were compelled and forced to this unchaste action.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 34

وَلَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكُمْ ءَايَاتٍ مُّبَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَثَلاً مِنَ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

34. "And certainly We have sent down unto you clear revelations, and an example of those who passed away before you, and an admonition unto the pious ones."

This noble verse, as it is the method of the Qur'an, refers to the pervious discussions as a summery or conclusion, and says:

"And certainly We have sent down unto you clear revelations, and an example of those who passed away before you, and an admonition unto the pious ones."

In other words, the addressee of this noble verse is all those who are fully capable from the time of descending of the Qur'an to the time of the universe destruction. What the holy Qur'an says is divided here into 3 parts:

First part: (clear verses). They are about the reasons of monotheism, stating the mission of prophets, the characteristics of Resurrection, stating the religious ordinances, whether they are obligatory or religiously prohibited or conventional, and fair virtues and other religious duties that are all clear and in line with wisdom and common good.

Second Part:It is about the life of past prophets and nations who gained their consequences as the result of Faith. It is also about those nations who were each chastised in a way because of corruption, polytheism, paganism, oppression, and denial of prophets.

Third part: It consists of some advise, admonition, and exhortation, but only the pious uses and get profit from them because they accept them. And wrongdoers will be chastised because of their deeds.

It is often of no avail to give advice to the dark hearted persons. Their likeness is the iron nail which naturally does not go into a stone.

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary
2. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn
3. Tafsir-i-Kabir by Fakhr-i-Razi
4. Tafsir-i-Kabir, and Fi Zilal
5. Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 99
6. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, p. 139, Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Al-Mizan, and Ruh ul-Ma'ani
7. Take care
8. 'Usul Kafi and the commentary by Ali ibn Ibrahim, Nur-uth-Thaqalyn Vol.3, p. 587
9. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 76, p. 336 and Man layahdaroh ul-Faqih
10. Kanz ud-Daqa'iq, the Commentary
11. Ibid
12. recorded in Sahih Bokhari
13. Ruh ul-Bayan, the Commentary
14. Ibid
15. Urar ul-Hikam
16. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 104, p. 38
17. Kanz ud-Daqa'iq
18. Man Layahduruh ul-Faqih
19. Ibid
20. E'aqaab Al-A'amal
21. Qurtabi, Commentary
22. Ali-ibn-Ibrahim, the Commentary
23. Nur-uth-Thaqallyn, the commentary
24. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, chapter 124, Tradition 8

25. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, p. 27
26. Ibid
27. Ibid
28. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn
29. Safinah-tul-Bihar, Vol. 1, p. 561
30. Ibid
31. Majam'ul-Bayan, under the verse
32. Man la Yahduruh ul-Faqih, Vol. 3, p 255
33. Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 103, p. 237
34. Majma' ul-Bayan and Qurtabi Commentary

Section 5: Allah is Light

Sura An-Nur - Verse 35

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَاَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِن شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لاَّ شَرْقِيّـِةٍ وَلاَ غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُّورٌ عَلَي نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الاَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

35. "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light, Allah guides unto His Light whom He pleases, and Allah sets forth similitudes for mankind, and Allah is All-Aware of all things."

'Light' is something that is itself bright and causes the brightness of other things. In Islamic culture, several things have been mentioned as 'light', including: The Holy Qur'an, tradition, knowledge, wisdom, faith, guidance, Islam, the holy Prophet (S), and the Infallible Imams (as).

Imam Ali (as) said:

"Nothing I saw unless I saw Allah before it, after it, and along with it."[1]

Concerning the Pure Essence of Allah a famous Persian poet says:

When I look at desert,
I see You.
When I look at sea,
I see You.

Whatever I look at, mountain and plain,
I see a sign of Your elegant stature.

For commenting on the above verse, there have been said many words, and commentators, philosophers, and Islamic mystics have discussed a lot.

The relation of this verse with the previous verses is in this way that in the former holy verses the discussion focused on chastity, struggling against indecency by means of various ways, and since what guarantees the execution of all Divine ordinances, especially controlling unrestrained instincts, more importantly sexual instinct, which is the most powerful one, can not be done without having 'faith' as support, finally the discussion is led to 'faith' and its powerful influence, when the verse begins saying:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth..."

What a nice, interesting, and valuable sentence! Yes Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. He is the brightness and illuminator of all of them.

Some commentators have interpreted the word 'Light' here as guider and leader[2]; and some of them have interpreted it as 'lighter' and some as 'beautifying'.

All these meanings are true, but the concept of the verse is still more inclusive.

In the Qur'an and Islamic Narrations some entities are called as 'light':

1. The Glorious Qur'an:

As Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 15 is recited:

"...indeed there has come to you light, from Allah, a Light and a clear Book."

Also recite in Sura Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 157:

"...Then those who... and follow the light which has been sent down with him: these are they that are the prosperous ones."

2. Faith:

We read in Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 257:

"Allah is the Guardian of those who have faith; He brings them out of darkness into the light..."

3. Divine Guidance and clear-sightedness:

As it is mentioned in Sura Al-An'am, No. 6, verse 122:

“Is he who was dead** (**with ignorance and polytheism**) **and We gave him life** (**by Our guidance**)**, and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people, as one whose likeness is in the utter darkness** (**of ignorance and polytheism**) **whence he cannot come forth from them?...”

4. Islam Religion:

It is said in Sura At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 32:

“...and Allah refuses but to perfect His Light, though the infidels detest it.”

5. The Prophet (S):

In Sura Al-Ahzab, No. 33, verse 46 we read about the Prophet (S):

“And as a summoner unto Allah by His permission, and as a light-giving torch.”

6. Imams and the Infallible Leaders:

As we read in Ziyarat-i-Jami‘ah:

“Allah created you (*as*) *lights, then He set you encircled* (*His Throne*)*.”*

In the same Ziyarat we read:

“You are the light for the good ones and guiders of those who do good deeds.”

7. Science and Knowledge:

This is also mentioned as light, as we read in a famous tradition:

“Knowledge is a light that Allah casts in any heart that He wills.”[3]

The above mentioned matters are on one side and, on the other side, we must study carefully the special characteristics of light some of its properties and qualities are as follows:

a. Light is the most beautiful and delicate entity in the world of material. It is the source of all beauties and delicacies.

b. As scientists say, light has got the highest velocity in the world; 300, 000 kilometers per second. Light can circulate the earth 7 times in less than a second (in a wink), therefore, extraordinarily great astronomical distances are only measured by the speed of light per year. It means the extent that light, with its extraordinary speed, can go in a year.

c. Light is a means for making things comprehensible and for viewing different creatures of the world. Without it we cannot see anything, therefore, it is both visible and making visible.

d. The light of the sun, which is the most important light of our world, grows flowers and plants. It is in fact the secret of all living creatures' survival, and it is impossible for any one or any creature to continue to live without light (directly or indirectly).

e. Today, it has been proven that all the colours that we see are the result of sunlight or other similar lights, otherwise, creatures have no colour in absolute darkness.

f. All existing energies in our environment, except atomic energy, are resulted from sunlight. The movement of Winds, falling of rain, movement of rivers, floods, and waterfalls and, finally, the movement of all living creatures are derived from sunlight.

The source of warmness, heat and what warms creatures is the very sunlight. Even the heat of fire that is gained from wood of trees or coal or petroleum and its derivatives are from the heat of sun, because all of them go back, according to scientific researches, to plants and animals that have acquired heat from sun and have stored it in themselves.

Therefore, the movement of engines is because of it, too.

g. The light of sun kills kinds of microbes and harmful insects. And if there were not the shining of this blissful light, the earth would turn into a great hospital whose inhabitants would be coming to grips with death.

Shortly, as we look more and closely at this strange phenomenon of the world (light), its valuable benefits and blesses will be more obvious.

Now, with these two introductions, if we want to choose a parallel or comparison from among sensible creatures of this world for Allah's Pure Essence (although He, the Almighty, is higher than any comparison), can we select any word other than 'light'?

He is the same Lord Who is the Creator of all universe. He is the Lighter of the world of creation, all living creatures are alive because of His command, and all creatures are sustained by Him, so that if for a second He stops His blissful looking at creatures, all will be inexistent.

It is interesting that as much as any being is related to Him, it acquires luminousness with respect to it:

The Holy Qur'an is light, because it is His words.

Islam is light, because it is His religion.

The prophets are light, because they are His messengers.

Infallible Imams (as) are Divine lights, because they are guardians of His religion after the prophets.

Faith is light, because it is the secret of relationship with Him.

Knowledge is light, because it brings familiarity with Him. Therefore,

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth…"

If we consider a wider meaning for light, that is: 'anything whose essence is obvious and apparent and clears other things', in this case applying the word 'light' to His Pure Essence is not likening, because nothing in the world of creation is more apparent and obvious than Him, and all other things than Him are apparent because of Him.

In the book named: Tauhid we read a tradition by Imam Ali Ibn Mus-ar-Rida (as).

That Imam was questioned about the interpretation of the verse,

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth…",

and he said:

"He guides both the inhabitants of the earth and the inhabitants of the heavens."

In fact, this is one of the qualities of the Divine Light, but it is certainly not limited to it. Thus, all the mentioned commentaries of this verse can be included in what was said. Each of them refers to one of the dimensions of this unique Light.

It is interesting that in the 47th part of Jushan Kabir supplication, which is a collection of Allah's attributes, we read:

"…Oh Light of lights! Oh Lighter of lights! Oh Creator of lights! Oh Administrator of light! Oh Measurer of light! Oh Light of all lights! Oh Light before any light! Oh Light after any light! Oh Light that is superior to any light! Oh Light that has no parallel!"

Therefore, all lights of universe come from His Light and return to the Light of His Pure Essence.

Mentioning the above fact, the holy Qur'an specifies the manner and the way of Divine Light by means of an exact and nice similitude.

It says:

"…The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light, Allah guides unto His Light whom He pleases, and Allah sets forth similitudes for mankind, and Allah is All-Aware of all things."

To explain this example, paying attention to some matters is necessary:

The Arabic word /miškat/ is, in fact, a hole and a tiny place which was used to be created in a wall and old common lanterns were kept in it in order to be protected from wind and storm.

And sometimes a ledge was made in the room and the side of that part of the wall, toward the yard, was covered with glass. Thus, both inside of the room and the yard were lighted, meanwhile the lantern was saved from any wind and storm.

Again '***Mishkat***' was also applied to the glass cases that were made in the form of cubic rectangle, which had a lid and on the top of it there was an opening for letting air out and it was used for putting light in it.

In short, '***Mishkat***' is a case for protecting light against wind and storm and, since it was often made in wall, the light was focused and reflected.

The Arabic word /Zujajah/ means glass. In fact, it is applied to transparent stones and since glass is made of stone materials and it is transparent, it is also called /zujajah/. Here it means a bulb that is put on the lamp to protect its flame and to lead the movement of air from bottom to the top and to increase the lightness of the torch.

The Arabic word /misbah/ means a lamp that usually has a wick and a flammable oil material and the wick is burned.

The Qur'anic sentence:

"...lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither of the East nor of the West..."

refers to an energetic material which is particularly suitable for this lamp, because olive oil is pressed from a blissful and fruitful tree. It is one of the best oils for burning.

It comes from a tree that all its branches and stems must be equally exposed to sunlight and it must be neither located in the eastern part of the garden near wall nor in the western part of it, where one side of it is in expose of sunlight, otherwise, its fruits will be half ripe and half unripe nor its oil will be pure.

Now we realize that for having a full light of this lamp, we must have 4 factors: a lantern which protects the lamp completely, and focuses light without decreasing its light. A bulb that regulates the movement of air and it must be so transparent that does never prevent lighting.

A lamp that produces light by using wick. And, finally, an energetic material that is pure and clean and must be so flammable that as though it is going to be burnt without touch of fire.

All of these, on one side, show the reality of material and its appearance. On the other side, great Islamic commentators have different opinions about the concept of this likening; or, in other words, to what Divine Light it is likened:

Some say that its purpose is that guiding light that Allah casts in the heart of the believers; in other words, its purpose is 'faith' that is placed in the hearts of the believers.

Some say that it is the holy Qur'an that casts light in the heart of man.

Some say that the similitude refers to the noble Prophet (S).

Some say that it refers to the reasons of monotheism and Allah's justice.

Some commentators have interpreted it as the spirit of piety and obedience, which is the cause of goodness and prosperity.

In fact, all the extensions that are for the spiritual light in the holy Qur'an and Islamic narrations are mentioned here as commentary. The spirit and concept of all of them is, in fact, one thing and that is the light of 'guidance', which comes from the holy Qur'an, revelation, and prophets, and it develops by reasons of monotheism and its result is submitting to Allah's command and piety.

Note: The light of faith that is in the heart of the believers has all these 4 factors which exist in a lighting lamp.

"***Misbah***" is those very flames of faith that appear in the heart of the believer wherefrom the light of guidance comes.

"***Zujajah***" and bulb is the heart of the believer that controls faith in his entity. And "***ieshkat***" is the chest of the believer or, in another word, it is the collection of his personality, knowledge, sciences, and thoughts that saves his faith from mishaps.

The meaning of the Qur'anic phrase which says:

"...a blessed olive-tree..."

is the very Divine revelation whose essence is fully pure and sincere and the believers' faith is fruitful and flaming by it.

In fact, this is the Light of Allah, the light which illuminates the heavens and the earth, and it comes from the center of the believers' heart and lights all their entity and being.

The reasons that are gained through wisdom and intellect are mixed with the light of revelation and will be the extension of '***light upon light***'.

And it is by this that the receptive hearts are guided to the Divine light, and the concept of

"...Allah guides unto His Light whom He pleases..."

is applied to them.

Therefore, for saving this Divine Light (the light of faith and guidance), a collection of Islamic teachings, knowledge, self-edification, and ethic is necessary to protect this "**Misbah**" as a "***Mishkat***" does.

It also needs an apt and receptive heart to regulate this program like 'zujajah'. And help through revelation is needed to give energy to it, like the blessed olive tree.

And this light of revelation must be free from deviating money-oriented tendencies that are western and eastern and cause decay, evilness and darkness.

It must be so pure, and clear, free from deviation that it mobilizes all man's powers without help of anything and becomes the extension of:

"…whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it…"

Any kind of interpretation by personal opinion, incorrect prejudice, personal tastes, imposed ideas, inclination to west and east, and any superstitions that defile the fruit of this blessed tree will decrease the luminosity of this lamp and sometimes put out the light.

This is the example that Allah has stated for His Light in this verse and He is All-Aware of all things.

We understand from the above matters that if we see in narrations by the infallible Imams that '**Mishkat**' is interpreted as the heart of the Prophet (S), 'Misbah' as the light of knowledge, '***Zujajah***" as Imam Ali (as), his successors, and '***Shajaratin Mubarakah***' (***the blessed tree***) as 'Ibrahim Khalil who is the root of this family, and the Qur'anic sentence:

"neither of the East nor of the West"

as negation of inclination to Judaism and Christianity, these are in fact the other face of that light of guidance and faith and are the statement of a clear extension of them, but it is not limited to them only.

And also if some commentators have interpreted this Divine Light as the holy Qur'an or intellectual reasons, or the holy Prophet (S), it has a root in common with the commentary of the above verse, too.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 36

فِي بُيُوتٍ أَذِنَ اللَّهُ أَن تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالآصَالِ

36. " (This lamp of guidance is found) in houses which Allah has allowed to be exalted and that His name be mentioned therein. There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings, "

Up to now we behold the characteristics of this Divine Light, the light of guidance and faith, through likening it to a very luminous lamp, now we must see that where this lamp is located and how its place

is. By specifying its place, all the things that are necessary for this will be clear.

Therefore, this verse implies that this lamp is found in the houses which Allah hath allowed its walls to be exalted so that enemies, devils, and the promiscuous ones can not reach it. They are houses that His name shall be remembered therein and the verses of the Qur'an and the facts of revelation are read in them.

The verse says:

*" (**This lamp of guidance is found**) **in houses which Allah has allowed to be exalted and that His name be mentioned therein**..."*

Many commentators consider the above verse to be related to the pervious verse, as we have commented on it; but some say that it is related to the next sentence, the relation which does not seem very correct.

But that some say what effect the existence of such lamp in the houses whose characteristics are stated has, we must say that a house, whose walls are exalted and decisive alert men guard it, guarantees the protection of this luminous lamp. Moreover those who seek such source of light will be aware of its place and hasten to enjoy it.

But what is the purpose of the Qur'anic word /buyut/ (Houses)? Its answer will be clear in the characteristics mentioned in the rest of the verse, where it says:

*"...**There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings,** "*

Some Points

1. We read in Ziyarat Jami'ah, when we address the Imams (as) of Sh'iite:

"...and Allah has placed you in houses that Allah (s.w.t.) has permitted to be exalted..."

Therefore, the sanctuaries of the infallible Imams (as) are counted as one of the extensions of the Qur'anic phrase /fi buyutin/ (in houses) mentioned in this holy verse.

2. The Arabic word /turfa'/in the verse means the height of a place, too, such as the verse which says:

'And (remember) when Abraham and Ishmael raised up the foundations of the House...'[4]

3. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Those houses are the houses of prophets, sages and the infallible Imams."[5]

Tha'labi says in his commentary that one day the Prophet (S) was reciting this verse when then Abubakr said:

“Is the house of Ali (as) and Fatimah (as) the extension of this verse?”

The Prophet (S) said:

“Yes, it is the best extension of this verse.”[6]

4. Imam Kazim (as) said:

“The purpose of the phrase

‘…in the mornings and the evenings”,

mentioned in the verse, is the punctual ritual prayers.”[7]

5. In the Holy Qur’an, there are many cases in which ‘glorification’ is used instead of ‘ritual prayer’. Sura ’Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 41:

“…and glorify (Him) in the evening and early morning.”

Sura Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 130:

“…and glorify your Lord by praising Him before the rising of the sun and before its setting…”

Sura An-Nur - Verse 37

رِجَالٌ لاَّ تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلاَ بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلاَةِ وَإِيتَآءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْماً تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالأَبْصَارُ

37. “Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and paying the poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes will be overturned;”

Men of Allah try their best for their worldly life while they are not ignorant of the Hereafter, because abandoning business is not a value, but if business is done along with remembrance of Allah, praying and giving alms-tax, then it will be respected high.

Therefore in this noble verse it is implied that those men who are not prevented from remembering of Allah, performing ritual prayer and paying alms-tax by neither business nor selling and buying, fear the day in which hearts and eyes will be capsized.

The verse says:

“Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and paying the poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes will

be overturned;"

These characteristics show that the aforementioned houses are the very centers that are fortified by Allah's commandment and Allah is remembered in them. In these centers Islam facts and Allah's ordinances are circulated.

In this extensive and comprehensive meaning, mosques are the houses of prophets and saints; especially the house of the Prophet (S) and the house of AM (as) are included.

There is no reason for the matter that some commentators in their commentaries have limited it only to the mosque or houses of prophets and such like.

And there are some narrations in which its clear extensions are mentioned:

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"This verse refers to the houses of prophets and the house of Imam Ali (as) is included in it, too."[8]

Another tradition indicates that when the Prophet (S) was reciting this verse he was asked:

"What is the purpose of/buyut/ (houses)?"

The Prophet said:

"The houses of prophets"

Again Abubakr asked:

"Is this house (pointing to the house of Fatimah (as) and Ali (as)) included in it, too?"

The Prophet said:

"Yes, it is the best of them."[9]

All of these denote the clear examples.

In another tradition upon the commentary of this verse by Imam Sadiq (as), recorded in the book Raudah Kafi, he has said:

*"Verily **Mishkat** is the heart of Muhammad (S), and **Misbah** is the very light of knowledge (and guidance), and **Zujajah** is the heart of Ali (as) or his self, (in which Misbah was placed after departure of the Prophet (S))."*[10]

Also in the book Tauhid, by Saduq, we read a tradition by Imam Baqir (as) who said:

*"Verily **Mishkat** is the light of knowledge in the heart of the Prophet (S) and **Zujajah** is the heart of Ali*

*(as)... And /**nurun 'ala nur**/ is Imams who are from the family of the Prophet (S) and they come one after the other.*

These Imams are assisted by the light of knowledge and wisdom. And this trend has been since the creation of Adam and will continue to the end of the world. These are the very testamentary guardians who are appointed as caliphs by Allah in the earth.

There is not and there will be not any age or time that the earth can be empty of one of them. They are Allah's Authorities over His servants."[11]

In another tradition by Imam Sadiq (as), 'Mishkat' has been interpreted as Fatimah (as), 'Misbah' as Hassan (as), and 'Zujajah' as Hussayn (as).[12]

There is another authentic tradition by Imam Baqir (as), in which Ghattadah, a famous Islamic jurist from Basrah, had a conversation with Imam (as) and he expressed his heartily amazement concerning Imam's peculiar grandeur. Imam said to him whether he knew that where he was sitting; in front of those about whom Allah has said:

'(This lamp of guidance is found) in houses which Allah has. allowed to be exalted and that His name be mentioned therein. There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings, '

'Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of in prayer and paying the poor-rate...'.

Then Imam said:

"You are what you said (a jurist from Basrah), and we are what the holy Qur'an says."

In answer, Ghattadah said:

"You are true, may Allah make me your sacrifice! By Allah that the purpose is not stone and clay houses (but its purpose is the houses of revelation, faith, and guidance)."[13]

In another tradition it has been narrated about this group of Divine men who guard revelation and guidance:

"They are businessmen who are not ignorant of Allah's remembrance because of trading or doing business. When it is the time of prayer, they pay its due unto Allah therein (perform prayer)."[14]

This refers to the matter that while they are carrying out economic good activities, all of their actions are overshadowed by Allah's name and they consider nothing preceding it.

Yes, any place or center which is set by Allah's command and Allah's name is mentioned in it and every morning and evening some believing men, who do not forget Allah's remembrance because of worldly

life, praise Allah and perform prayer, is the center of Divine lights (Mishkat), faith and guidance.

In fact, this kind of house has some characteristics:

First, it is set by Allah's command.

Second, its bases and walls are so exalted and fortified that they protect it from the penetration of Satan.

Third, it is the center for remembering Allah.

Fourth, some men guard it who praise Allah every morning and every evening, and the worldly beguiling attractions do not make them ignore the Truth.

These houses with such characteristics are the sources of guidance and faith.

It is also important to mention the matter that in this verse both the Arabic word /tijarat/ (merchandise) and the word /bay'/ (sale) have been used. Although it seems that both of them mean one thing, the difference between them may be that /tijarat/ refers to a continuous job and /bay'/ refers to an impermanent action which is done for one time.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the matter that it does not say that 'they are men who do not do business or sale', but it says:

"Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and paying the poor-rate…"

They always fear the day of Hereafter and Allah's justice court, in which hearts and eyes will be capsized because of its awe.

(The Arabic verb /yaxafun/ is a form of verb which in the Arabic language indicates the continuity of their fear of the resurrection day. It is a sort of fear that compels them to their duties and missions.)

Moreover, great commentators have different opinions about the Qur'anic phrase /nurun 'ala nur/

(*'Light upon light'*):

In Majma'-ul-Bayan, the deceased Tabarsi says: it refers to prophets who come one after another from one root and continue the path of guidance.

Fakhr-i-Razi says: it refers to gathering of light rays and their concentration, as it is said about believers:

'*A believer has 4 positions. If he receives a favour or bless, he thanks Allah. If he receives a disaster, he is patient and withstands it. If he says a word, he tells the truth. If he judges, he seeks justice. He is like a living man among the dead when he is among ignorant people.*

He moves among 5 lights: his saying is light. His deed is light. His place of arrival is light. His place of exit is light. His aim is the light of Allah in the Day of Hereafter.'

It is also probable that the first light in the verse refers to the light of Divine guidance through revelation, and the second light refers to His guidance by means of intellect. Or the first light is the light of religious guidance, and the second light is Divine guidance, therefore, it is

'light upon light'.

Thus, this holy phrase is sometimes interpreted as different sources of light (prophets), and sometimes as various kinds of light, and sometimes as its various phases, while all of them are possible and can be included in the meaning of the verse and, therefore, its concept is vast.[15]

Some Notes to Be Studied

1. Some traditions indicate that the objective of the persons mentioned in this noble verse is those businessmen who stop working and get prepared to perform ritual prayer when they hear the call to prayer.[16]

2. Business is not the only factor that entertains man and prevents him from remembering Allah, but there are also other factors mentioned in the Qur'an, such as: multiplication of wealth, desires, bad friend and offspring.

3. Olive tree has been described as 'blessed tree' in the above verses. And if in that age the importance of this phrase was not clear when the Qur'an was descended, now we know it fully, for great scientists have spent many years to study the different properties of plants and they tell us that this tree produces a blessed fruit which contains one of the most useful and valuable oils and it plays an important role in the health of body.

Ibn 'Abbas says that all parts of this tree is valuable and good, even its ash has also got property and benefit. It is the first tree that after the Flood of Noah (as) grew, and prophets have uttered invocation prayed for it to be a blessed tree.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 38

لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُم مِن فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

38. "That Allah may reward them with the best of what they have done, and increase for them out of His grace. And Allah gives sustenance to whom He pleases without stint."

Allah compensates all shortages of Allah's men's deeds and gives them full reward. This noble verse

points to the great reward of these guardians of the light of guidance who are the lovers of truth and reality.

It says:

"That Allah may reward them with the best of what they have done, and increase for them out of His grace..."

There is nothing to get surprised at, because Allah's grace is not limited for those who deserve His Grace;

"...And Allah gives sustenance to whom He pleases without stint."

Upon the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase:

/ahsana ma 'amilu/ (***'the best of what they did'***)***,***

mentioned in the verse, some say it refers to all good deeds, including recommended duties and compulsory ones, great or small.

Some others say it refers to the fact that Allah rewards a person who does a good deed tenfold, or sometimes 700 times or even more, as we read in Sura Al-'An'am, No.6, verse 160:

"Whosever brings a good (***deed***)***, he shall have ten times its like..."***

And in Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 261, we read:

"The likeness of those who spend their wealth in Allah's way is as the likeness of a grain (***of corn***) ***that grows seven ears, with***) ***a hundred grains in every ear. And Allah multiplies*** (***in abundance***) ***for whom He wills..."***

Upon the commentary of the above-mentioned phrase, there is also this probability that the purpose of it is that Allah will reward them all of their deeds according to the measure of their best deeds. Even their insignificant and middle deeds will be rewarded in the row of their best deeds.

This manner is not beyond the grace of Allah, because when justice and punishment are in contemplation, equality is necessary, but when grace and generosity come in, bounties and remittal are without stint, since His Pure Essence is infinite and His bless is unlimited and His generosity is endless.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 39

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْآنُ مَآءً حَتَّي إِذَا جَآءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئاً وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِندَهُ فَوَفّاهُ حِسَابَهُ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

39. “And (for) those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert, which the thirsty one supposes to be water until when he comes unto it he finds it naught, and finds Allah with him Who pays him his reckoning in full; and Allah is swift in taking account.”

Since the previous verses spoke about Allah’s light, the light of faith and guidance, the above verse speaks about obscurity of disbelief, ignorance, , faithlessness, dark-hearted pagans and hypocrites in order to complete the discussion and to make their position clear, and compare their status with others’.

The verse speaks about those whose entity is:

‘layer upon layer of darkness’;

in contrary to the believers whose life and thoughts are:

‘light upon light’.

Here the word is about individuals who are after mirage instead of water in the dry and hot desert of life and then lose their life because of thirst, while the believers have found the clear spring of guidance under the auspices of faith and have settled beside it.

At first, the verse says:

“And (for) those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert, …”

Then it continues saying:

“…which the thirsty one supposes to be water until when he comes unto it he finds it naught, and finds Allah with him Who pays him his reckoning in full; and Allah is swift in taking account.”[17]

The Arabic word /sarab/ is derived from the word ‘Saraba’, which means: ‘walking in a slope’, and the word ‘Sarb’ means: ‘an inclined way’. Therefore, ‘Sarab’ is applied to a shine that appears from a distance in deserts and slopes and it seems that there is water over there, while it is nothing but a reflection of sunlight.

The Arabic word /qi‘ah/ means ‘a vast area and ground that has no water and plant’, and, in other words, it is applied to arid deserts in which mirage is often seen.

Commentators of the Qur’an and lexicologists consider this word singular and its plural form is /qi‘an/ or /qi‘at/.[18]

Physicists say that when the air gets warm, the layer of air, that is directly above the earth, gets less dense and becomes different than the adjacent layer, then the waves of light are broken and mirage is because of this.

An English dictionary defines a mirage as:

'It is caused by the refraction of light rays from the object through layers of air having different densities as the result of unequal temperature distribution.'

Sura An-Nur - Verse 40

أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُجِّيٍّ يَغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّن فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِن فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَآ أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكَدْ يَرَاهَا وَمَن لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُوراً فَمَا لَهُ مِن نُورٍ

40. "Or** (**the Unbelievers' deeds**) **is like utter darkness in a vast, abysmal sea. There covers him a wave, above which is another wave, above which is a cloud;** (**with layers of**) **darkness one over the other. When he holds out his hand, he can hardly see it. And for whomever Allah does not appoint light, for him there is no light."

Each deed that a believer does is light and each deed that a disbeliever does is darkness. Instead of opening way for them, disbelievers' deeds mislead them more and it will be veil upon veil.

Therefore, in this noble verse the Qur'an says:

"Or** (**the Unbelievers' deeds**) **is like utter darkness in a vast, abysmal sea. There covers him a wave, above which is another wave, above which is a cloud;** (**with layers of**) **darkness one over the other. When he holds out his hand, he can hardly see it…"

Yes, the true light in men's life is only the light of faith, and life will be dark and obscure without it, but this light of faith comes only from Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"…And for whomever Allah does not appoint light, for him there is no light."

To understand this example fully, it is first necessary to pay attention to the meaning of the Arabic word /lujjiy/. It means: 'a vast and very deep sea', and, in fact, it is derived from the Arabic word /lijaj/ which means: 'to go after or insist on a job, (usually bad ones)'. Then it has been applied to the succession of waves of the sea and to their standing behind each other.

Since if a sea is deeper and vaster, its waves are more, this word is applied to the deep and vast seas.

Now, consider a wavy and rolling sea which is very deep, and we know that sunlight, the strongest light, penetrates into the sea to a certain level and its last ray will disappear in almost a depth of 700 meter, so that in deeper parts continual darkness and eternal night rule, for no light penetrates there.

We know also this fact that if water is clear and calm, light will be reflected better, but wavy water breaks light ray, and a little amount of it can go deep into water.

And if, above a wavy sea, a dark cloud stands, the resulting darkness from it will be very dense.

First the darkness of the depth of sea, second the darkness of wavy sea, and third the darkness of dark cloud are the layers of darkness that are placed on each other. It is obvious that in such a darkness the closest objects can not be seen, and even if man holds his hand close to his eye, he can not see it.

A disbeliever who has not the light of faith is like someone who is involved in such triple darkness. On the contrary, fair-minded believers are the extension of 'light upon light'.

Some of commentators have said that this triple darkness in which faithless people are involved, is as follows: the darkness of incorrect belief, the darkness of wrong speech, and the darkness of bad behaviour.

In other words, the deeds of faithless people are dark both from the point of fundamental and from the view point of their reflection in their speech, and also because of their full harmony with their other evil deeds.

Some other commentators have said that this triple darkness is the phases of their ignorance: 1) They do not know. 2) They do not know that they do not know. 3) Nevertheless, they think that they do know. And this phase is that compound and multiplied ignorance.

Some other have said since the main factors of cognizance, according to the text of the Qur'an, are 3, that is: heart (in the sense of intellect), eye, and ear, as Sura An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 78 says:

"And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers** (**while**) **you knew nothing, and He appointed for you hearing and sight and hearts...".

But disbelievers have lost both the light of heart, and the light of eye, and the light of ear and they are plunging in darkness.[19]

It is obvious that these 3 comments are in harmony and it is possible that the verse refers to all of them.

Anyway, we conclude from these couple of verses that the deeds of disbelievers are likened a false light that appears like mirage in a dry and hot desert, and not only does not it quench their thirst, but also their thirst increases because of running.

Then, after this false light, which is the faithless hypocrites' specious deeds, there is the inward of these deeds, which is full of darkness and dense horrible obscurity. This awful inward deranges all man's senses and the closest objects will be invisible to him, even he cannot see himself, let alone others.

It is obvious that in such a terrible darkness, man is totally lonely and ignorant. He can neither find the

way, nor does he have any fellow traveler, nor does not know his status, and he does not have any means, because he has not enjoyed the source of light, that is Allah, and he has covered with the veil of ignorance and conceit.

If you do not forget, we have said that light is the source of beauties, luminosities, life, and movement, but darkness is the source of the ugliness, death, mortality, immobility and silence. Darkness is the center of fear and hate. It is accompanied with coolness and depression. This is the status of those who lose the light of faith and plunge in the darkness of disbelief.

Some Tradition About 'Light' and 'Darkness'

1. Once Imam Sajjad (as) was asked:

"Why are those who stay awake during the night and make supplication to Allah facially the best?"

He said:

"Because they have private communion with Allah and Allah covers them with His light."[20]

2. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Since I heard the Prophet (S) said: 'Night prayer is light.', I have not lost one night to perform night prayer."[21]

3. The Prophet (S) said:

"Prayer is light."[22]

4. The Prophet (S) said:

"Anyone who testifies rightly in order to restore a Muslim's right by it, his face will be luminous on the day of dooms and his face emit light as far as the eye can see and people know him by his name and family."[23]

5. Imam Ali (as) said:

"There is truth with any right matter and there is light with any right thing."[24]

6. A man said to the Prophet (S) that I would like to be mustered on the Day of Hereafter luminously. The Prophet (S) said:

"Do not commit oppression upon anyone (so that) you will be mustered in light on the Day."[25]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"Be in awe of injustice, because it causes darkness in the Day of Hereafter."[26]

8. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 257:

"Allah is the Guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light; and those who disbelieve, their guardians are false-deities (*taqut*). *They bring them out of the light into the darkness; they are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein shall they abide forever."*

1. The Commentary book: 'Nur', following of the verse, and for more information, you may refer to Kitab ul-Wafi, Vol. 1, p. 382, and Tauhid-i-Saduq, chapter Ar-ru'yah, p. 107
2. Burhan and Safi commentary, because of this noble tradition by Imam Rida (a.s): "Allah guides all dwellers of the skies and the earth to what is their best"
3. Bihar, Vol. 1, p. 325; and Mizan ul-Hikmah, p. 6016
4. Sura Al- Baqarah, No. 2, verse 127
5. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary
6. Ruh ul-Ma'ani, the Commentary
7. Bihar, Vol. 23, p. 326
8. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 607
9. Majma' ul-Bayan, following the verse
10. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 602 & 603
11. Ibid
12. Ibid
13. Ibid, p. 602
14. Ibid, p. 609
15. Take care
16. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn
17. Imam Ali (as) was asked about how Allah reckons all people together. He said:

"As He provides all sustenance in one time." (Majma' ul- Bayan)

18. Majma' ul-Bayan, Ruh ul-Ma'ani, the Commentary by Qurtabi, and Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi
19. Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse
20. 'Ilal-ush-Sharayi', Vol. 1, p. 366
21. Bihar, Vol. 41, p. 71, and 'Allhar us-Sadiqin, Vol. 11, p. 91
22. At-Taqib wat-tarhib, Vol. 1, p. 156
23. Bihar, 104/311/9
24. Kafi, 2/54/04
25. Kanz ul-Abraham'mal
26. 'Usul Kafi, Vol. 4, p. 17

Section 6: Everything In the Heavens and the

Earth Glorifies Allah

Sura An-Nur - Verses 41-42

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرُ صَافَّاتٍ كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلاَتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَإِلَي اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

41. "Have you not seen that unto Allah glorifies whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, and the birds with wings outspread (in their flight)? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And Allah is Aware of what they do."
42. "And unto Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and unto Allah is the ultimate return (of all)."

In the previous verses, Allah's light, the light of guidance and faith, the dense darkness of disbelief and ignorance were mentioned, while the concerned verses mention the reasons of monotheism, which are the signs of Divine lights and means of guidance.

First the holy Prophet (S) is addressed when it says:

"Have you not seen that unto Allah glorifies whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, and the birds with wings outspread (in their flight)? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And Allah is Aware of what they do."

Since this general praise of creatures is a reason for the creative power of Allah, and His creative power is the reason of His ownership of the whole world of existence, and it is also the reason of the fact that all creatures return to Him, in the next verse the Qur'an adds:

"And unto Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and unto Allah is the ultimate return (of all)."

Another possibility in the relation of this verse with the pervious verse is that in the last sentence of the pervious verse, Allah's awareness of deeds of all men and the glorification of creatures is mentioned, and this holy verse refers to His justice court in the next world, Allah's ownership of the heavens and the earth and His right to judge.

Notes

First: The meaning of the Qur'anic sentence /'alam tara/ means as it is translated, but it is probable that the subject of the Arabic verb /'alima/ (to be aware) is Allah, not creatures.

In this case the translation of the verse will be in this way:

"...Of each He knows verily the worship and the praise..."

Second: Many times the Qur'an has explicitly stated the praise, prayer, and prostration of creatures, and sometimes has said:

"...but you do not understand their glorification..."[1]

It is understood from these verses that knowledge and intelligence is not limited to men. Though some consider the glorification of the creatures of existence as genetic glorification and nonverbal language of creation, the apparent of the verses does not say this.

Third: in this noble verse, man is indirectly warned by Allah:

1) creatures of heavens and earth and birds are praising Allah, why is man neglectful of it?

2) Creatures' praise is done consciously, why does not man have presence of heart?

3) Birds glorify Allah and are praying when they are flying, but some men bombard others when they are in airplane and are in negligence and unawareness.

Forth: A tradition indicates that when Imam Sadiq (as) heard the sound of a sparrow, he said:

"This bird is busy praising and praying."[2]

Fifth: Why does the above verse put emphasis on only the praise of birds, while their wings are extended at the time of flying, and does not mention other creatures? The answer is that in addition to a lot of variety that birds have, they enjoy characteristics that attract every wise man.

These heavy things fly fast in the air and break the force of gravity, especially when their wings are extended fully and they do not move them and they ride waves of air. They go everywhere and turn every side without causing themselves any difficulty.

Their knowledge of anemometry issues, their profound knowing of geographical position of the earth at the time of traveling and migrating from a continent to another continent and even from the north polar areas to the south polar parts, and a strange system that guides them in this long journey, even when the sky is cloudy, are of surprising issues and of the obvious reasons of monotheism.

The special radar that, some birds have, helps them to find their way in the darkness of night, and even

the fact that a kind of them targets a prey in the depth of water and can catch it very swiftly is the very surprising characteristic of these birds.

Anyway, there are secrets in birds that because of them Qur'an has specially put emphasis on them.

Sixth: What is the purpose of/salat/ (prayer)?

Some commentators of the Qur'an, such as the Late Tabarsi in “Majma‘-ul-Bayan” and 'Alusi in “Ruh-ul-Bayan”, have interpreted the word ‘Salat’, mentioned here, as supplication, which is its main concept in dictionary.

Thus, the creatures of heaven and earth pray Allah with gestures or with their own verbal language and ask Him grace and He, Who is absolutely gracious, bestows it on them, according to their potentialities, as they deserve.

But they primitively know what they need and what they must ask for and what kind of supplication they ought to pray.

Moreover, according to aforementioned verses, they are humble before His magnificent court and yield to the rules of creation. On the other hand they declare Allah's attributes of perfection with their whole entity and negate any shortcoming about Him. Thus, their four worships are completed by: praising, glorification, prayer, and prostration.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 43

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُزْجِي سَحَاباً ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَاماً فَتَرَي الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلاَلِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِن جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِن بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَن مَّن يَشَآءُ يَكَادُ سَنَابَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالاَبْصَارِ

43. “Have you not seen that Allah drives gently the clouds, then joins them together, then converts them into a mass, and you see the rain coming forth from the midst of them? And He sends down from the heaven from the (clouds like) mountains wherein is hail, afflicting therewith whom He pleases, and turning it away from whom He pleases. The flash of its lightning well-nigh blinds the sight.”

To study creation is the best way for knowing Allah which causes to have His love. All movements in the universe are done with Divine will and power and also for a wise aim.

Therefore, in this verse, we face a little part of the wonders of creation, and the science, wisdom and magnificence that are behind them. All of them are reasons of His Pure Essence and monotheism.

So the Qur'an, addressing the Prophet (S), says:

“Have you not seen that Allah drives gently the clouds, then joins them together, then converts them into a mass, and you see the rain coming forth from the midst of them?...”

The Arabic word /yuzji/ is derived from the word /’izja’/ which means ‘to drive softly’. It is the driving that is used for arranging the scattered creatures, and this word is exactly true about clouds.

Every piece of clouds come from a place of the seas and then Allah drives them towards each other, links and condenses them.

The Arabic word /rukam/ means objects and things that are piled up.

The Qur’anic word /wadq/, as many commentators believe, means: ‘drops of rain that come from clouds.’ But, in Mufradat, Raqib says that it has another meaning and that is the tiny bits of water that are scattered in the air at the time of raining.

But, the first meaning is more proper here, for what shows Allah’s magnificence more is those enlivening drops of rain, not those dust-like bits of rain. Moreover, wherever the holy Qur’an mentions clouds and descending of favours, it refers to the issue of rain.

Yes, it is the rain that enlivens dead grounds and the earth, basically and covers trees with life dress and waters both men and animals.

Then another wonderful phenomenon of sky and clouds is referred to.

It says:

“...And He sends down from the heaven from the (***clouds like***) ***mountains wherein is hail, afflicting therewith whom He pleases, and turning it away from whom He pleases...”***

When hail falls, the blossoms of trees, fruits, the products of farms, even some animals and men are usually not safe from its harm.

Yes, it is Allah Who sometimes sends down enlivening rain from cloud and sometimes with a little change in it, He converts it into harmful and even deadly hail. This shows the ultimate of His power and grandeur, where He sets harm and benefit, as well as death and life of men beside each other and even He has interwoven them.

In the end of the verse, another heavenly phenomenon, that is the sign of monotheism, is mentioned:

“...The flash of its lightning well, nigh blinds the sight.”

These clouds which are, in fact, made of water bits which emit such a fire when they become full of electricity that their lightning rivets eyes and their thunder sometimes shakes everything. Such great power that is among this delicate vapor is verily wonderful.

The only question that remains here is that: From which mountain of heaven do these hails fall and come down?

Here, commentators have different opinions:

1. Some say that the Arabic word /jibal/ (mountains) here has got ironical aspect, as we say 'mountain of trouble' or 'mountain of food'. Therefore, a huge amount or mountain of hail is created by clouds in the sky and part of it descends on cities, some on deserts, and even some of it may hit some individuals.

2. Some have said that the purpose of 'mountains' is huge masses of cloud that are dimensionally like mountains.

3. The writer of the commentary of Fi Zilal[3], says something else which seems more proper. He says that masses of cloud in the sky are truly like mountains.

Though when we look at them from the earth, we see them even, while those who fly with aircraft above them see that clouds seem like mountains and valleys that are on the earth In other words, looking from the above, the surface of clouds is never even and like the surface of the earth has got a lot of unevenness.

So, from this point of view, calling 'clouds like mountain' is proper.

Besides the above clear statement, the explanation of some scientists can be added here:

Hail is precipitation of balls or pieces of ice with a diameter of 5 mm to 10 cm (about 0.2 to 4 inches). Small hail (also called sleet, or ice pellets) has a diameter of less than 5 mm.

Because the formation of hail usually requires cumulonimbus or other convective clouds with strong updrafts, it often accompanies thunderstorms. Large hailstones are often characterized by alternating layers of clear and opaque ice, caused by irregular rates of freezing.

In areas where the temperature is not far below 0° C (32° F), freezing occurs slowly, allowing trapped air to escape and producing clear ice. When the hailstone then moves into a much colder area, freezing occurs quickly, trapping air and producing a layer of white ice.

Hail is extremely destructive to buildings and crops; if large enough, it may be dangerous to animals exposed to it. Hailstones about 15 cm (6 inches) in diameter have fallen during thunderstorms in the Middle Western United States.

Hailstorms are most common in the middle latitudes and usually last around 15 minutes. They ordinarily occur in middle to late afternoon.[4]

Regarding this matter, the scientific point that exists will be clearer, for huge hails are formed only when masses of cloud get very dense so that when storm throws frozen balls of hail into them, they absorb

more water. And this is when masses of cloud are upwardly located like mountain and they will be a considerable source for forming hail.

There is another analysis by other writers, the summary of which is as follows:

“In the concerning verses, lofty clouds explicitly refer to mountains of ice, or, in other words, mountains in which there is a kind of ice, and this is very interesting.

For after invention of aircraft and the possibility of high flight, man’s knowledge was developed and scientists found clouds that consist of icy pillars and so the appellation ‘mountains of ice’ is truly applied to them.

And it is again surprising that one of Russian scientists has used the phrase ‘mountains of cloud’ or ‘mountains of snow’ in describing stormy raining clouds. Thus, it is now obvious that there are really mountains of ice in the heaven.

This is the miracle of the holy Qur’an that, 14 centuries before, it said:

“...And He sends down from the heaven from the* (*clouds like*) *mountains wherein is hail...”

Sura An-Nur - Verse 44

يُقَلِّبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

44. “Allah alternates the night and the day; verily there is a lesson in this for those with sight.”

The shift and change of night and day is not accidental, but it is based on an exact system.

A person of insight can learn lesson from all times and all places.

The phenomena of the universe provide us lessons, that we do ponder them.

In this noble verse, one of the signs of creation and Allah’s grandeur, which is the creation of day and night, is mentioned.

It says:

“Allah alternates the night and the day; verily there is a lesson in this for those with sight.”

Commenting this holy verse, there are stated different opinions about how this revolution is:

Some consider it as the coming and going of day and night; day comes and makes the night invisible and vice versa.

Some say that it means shortening of one of them and prolonging of the other one, which happens gradually, and the formation of seasons depends on it.

Finally, some say that it refers to the changes such as warmness, coldness, and other events that happen during the day and night.5

It must be mentioned that the above commentaries are not in conflict with each other, and it is possible that all of them are included in the Qur'anic phrase /yuqallibu/ ('alternates').

Undoubtedly, as it is scientifically proven, both coming and going of the day and night, and gradual changes of them, are vitally important for man and it is a lesson for 'those with sight'.

Constant shining of sun increases temperature of the air, bums living creatures, and mentally wearies men, but when the darkness of night comes after this shining, it modifies it totally.

The gradual changes of day and night, which is the factor of formation of four seasons, play an important role in the growth of plants, the life of all living creatures, the descending of rain, and storing water in the ground.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 45

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَآبَّةٍ مَن مَآءٍ فَمِنْهُم مَن يَمْشِي عَلَي بَطْنِهِ وَمِنْهُم مَن يَمْشِي عَلَي رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُم مَن يَمْشِي عَلَي أَرْبَعٍ يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَآءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

45. "And Allah has created every animal from water; so of them is (a kind) that walks upon its belly and (a kind) that walks upon two legs and (a kind) that walks upon four. Allah creates what He pleases. Verily Allah is Ail-Powerful over every thing."

All of creatures are created by His will. In this noble verse, one of the main aspects of creation system, which is one of the most obvious reasons of monotheism, that is the issue of life with its various forms, reference has been made to.

It says:

"And Allah has created every animal from water..."

All of them are made of water, but they have different and wonderful forms;

"...so of them is (a kind) that walks upon its belly and (a kind) that walks upon two legs and (a kind) that walks upon four..."

Yet this is not limited to these things and life has got extraordinarily various forms, including creatures

that live in the sea, or insects that have thousands species and thousands faces.

Therefore in the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"...Allah creates what He pleases. Verily Allah is All-Powerful over every thing."

Some Points

First: There are different opinions about the matter that the verse under discussion refers to what kind of 'water'. There are three commentaries on it:

A) The purpose of water is the drop of seed. Many of commentators have chosen this commentary and in some narrations it has been referred to, too.

The problem that this commentary faces with is that not all creatures are created from the drop of seed. For there are unicellular organisms and some other animals that are the extensions of animal and are created through cell division, an asexual reproduction, and it must be said that the above subject has got a typical aspect, not a common and general aspect.

B) The purpose of it is the creation of the first creature, for according to some Islamic narrations, the first creature that Allah created was water and men were created after water.

Moreover, according to the new scientific theories, the first sign of life appeared in the seas and this phenomenon ruled in the depth of seas or in the shallows of seas before it appeared anywhere else. (Of course, the power that created the living creature with all of its complexity in the first phase and then guided it in other phases was Allah's will, a supernatural force.)

C) The last commentary is that the purpose of the creation of living creatures from water is that now the main material that makes up them is water and the main part of their body is made of water and that without water no living creature can continue to live.

Of course, these commentaries are in line with each other, but the first and the second ones seem more correct.

Second: The question that raises here is that animals are not limited to these three groups (reptiles, bipeds, quadrupeds), but there are many creatures that have more than four legs?

The answer to this question lies in the verse itself, for it is said in the next sentence:

"...Allah creates what He pleases..."

Moreover, the most important animals that man is to deal with are these three groups. Besides, some believe that even some animals that have more than four feet rely mainly on four feet and the rest of feet functions as helping means.[6]

Third: Undoubtedly the strangest phenomenon of this world is life, the issue that is still an unsolved riddle for scientists.

All of them say that living creatures are created from lifeless materials of this world, but no one knows how and under what circumstances this mutation has happened, for in no laboratory the changing of lifeless materials to living creatures is observed, although thousands of scientists have thought about this and experimented a lot during very many years.

What is certain is that the secrets of life are so complex that the entire manly knowledge and sciences, with their whole development, are not able to discover and understand them yet.

In current condition of the world, living creatures are created from only living creatures and no living creature is created from a lifeless creature. Certainly it was not so in a long time ago and; in other words, life in the earth has got a history of creation that no one knows how its condition was and it is a riddle to man.

More strange than that is the species of life. There are completely various aspects of life; unicellular organisms that are seen only by means of microscope unto huge whales that are more than 30 meters long and they are mountain of floating meet.

From insects of which hundreds of thousand species are discovered to birds that are thousand and thousands species, each of which have a world full of secrets.

Zoology books that today constitute a great part of great libraries of the world show only a little of these secrets. Sea, that has always been full of secrets, specially its animals, is still unknown to us with all knowledge that we have about it.

Verily how magnificent is Allah Who has created these various animals and has bestowed them what they have needed. How great is His power and knowledge that He has bestowed them what is needed proportionate to their conditions. And it is strange that all of them at first were created from water, and some little of the simple materials of the earth.

Sura An-Nur - Verses 46-47

لَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَآ ءَايَاتٍ مُبَيِّـنَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَي صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

وَيَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالرَّسُولِ وَأَطَعْنَا ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّي فَرِيقٌ مّـِنْهُم مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَآ أُوْلَئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

46. "Verily We have sent down revelations explanatory, and Allah guides whom He pleases unto a straight way."

47. “And they say: ‘We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey’. Then, after that, some of them turn away, these are not (really) believers.”

Occasion of Revelation

Commentators have mentioned 2 occasions of revelation for a part of these verses:

First: One of the hypocrites had some quarrel with one Jewish man. That Jewish man asked that apparently-Muslim hypocrite to go together to the Prophet (S) to have their quarrel settled down, but the hypocrite did not accept it and asked the Jewish man for going to Ka‘b Ibn Ashraf Yahudi (a Jewish man) for issuing judgment.

(Even according to some narrations, the hypocrite said it was possible that Mohammad (S) might not judge between them justly.)

The above verses were sent down and reprimanded such persons very severely.

Second: An argument happened between Imam Ali (as) and Othman, (or according to a narration, between that Imam and Muqayrat-Ibn Wa’il). And it was for a land that he had bought from Imam Ali (as) and then some stones were found in it and the buyer wanted to cancel the bargain because of it.

Imam Ali (as) asked for the judgment of the holy Prophet (S) between them, but Hakam Ibn Abee Abil-‘As, one of the hypocrites, said to the buyer not to do that for if he went to Ali’s cousin, the Prophet (S), he would certainly judge between them in favour of him. The above verse was descended and rebuked him.[7]

Since the words in previous verses were about belief in Allah, the reasons of monotheism, and His signs in the world of creation, the concerned verses talk about the signs of faith, reflections of monotheism in man’s life and his yielding to the Truth.

First it says:

“Verily We have sent down revelations explanatory…”

These are some verses that lighten the hearts by the light of faith and Unity. Of course, the existence of these ‘explanatory revelations’ paves the ground for faith, but the main role is played by Divine guidance, because:

“…and Allah guides whom He pleases unto a straight way.”

We know that Allah’s will and providence is not undue, and the light of guidance is cast on those hearts that are receptive for accepting it; that is, they have started spiritual struggle and taken steps towards Him.

Then hypocrites, who have no faith and only speak about faith and faith cannot be cast on their hearts, are reprimanded.

The verse proclaims:

"And they say: 'We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey'. Then, after that, some of them turn away, these are not (***really***) ***believers."***

What kind of faith is it that it is only uttered by their tongue and it is not manifested in other fields of their deeds?

It is understood from this verse that if a person's faith remains only at the level of tongue and he does not really believe in Allah, he is not a believer, for if he were a believer his faith would not be rejected in this verse.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 48

وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَي اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُم مُّعْرِضُونَ

48. "And when they are summoned unto Allah and His Messenger in order that he may judge between them, behold, some of them are averse;"

The sign of real faith is the acceptance of the Prophet's judgment (S), and the sign of hypocrisy is rejecting his judgment.

So, in this noble verse, as one obvious reason for their disbelief, the Qur'an implies that when they are invited to the Book of Allah and His ordinance and religion as well as to the judgment of His Messenger (S) so that he judges between them, a part of them turn away.

The holy verse in this regard says:

"And when they are summoned unto Allah and His Messenger in order that he may judge between them, behold, some of them are averse;"

That the Holy Qur'an mentions the name of the Prophet (S) after the name of Allah is because of the fact that the Prophet's judgment is ordered by Allah and Allah's judgment and that of the Prophet (S) are the same.

Sura An-Nur - Verses 49-50

وإِن يَكُن لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ يَأْتُوا إِلَيْهِ مُذْعِنِينَ

أَفِي قُلُوبِهِم مَرَضٌ أَمِ ارْتَابُوا أَمْ يَخَافُونَ أَن يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَسُولُهُ بَلْ أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

49. "But if the truth be on their side, they come unto him willingly with submission."
50. "Is there in their hearts a disease, or do they doubt, or are they in fear that Allah and His Messenger will deal unjustly with them? Nay, but such are the unjust ones."

When hypocrites and pagans saw that they were not right and they themselves were guilty and sinful, they refused to go to the Prophet (S) for judgment, for they knew that the Prophet would judge between them justly and fairly, and truth is not welcomed to every one.

But if they found out that quarrel would end in favour of them, they would hasten to achieve what is their right and they would not be content with anything except with the Prophet's judgment, so that the right, that was proved to be on the shoulder of their opposite party, would be served to them.

The verse says:

"But if the truth be on their side, they come unto him willingly with submission."

Another point in this holy verse is that only a group of hypocrites refused to ask the judgment of the Prophet (S), perhaps, for the reason that another group was not so bold and impudent, for, hypocrisy has got various degrees and levels as faith has got.

Then in the next verse, the main factors and motivations of their unyielding to the judgment of the Prophet (S) are mentioned in three sentences.

First it says:

"Is there in their hearts a disease..."

This is one of the attributes of the hypocrites who declare to be faithful, but they never yield to the judgment of Allah and the Prophet (S), because they heartedly deviate from monotheism.

Or if they do not have the sickness of hypocrisy in their heart, they have doubts and it is natural that when a person has doubt in accepting a religion, he does not succumb to its concomitants.

The verse continues saying:

"...or do they doubt..."

And if they are not any of the above, they are believers, the verse says:

"...or are they in fear that Allah and His Messenger will deal unjustly with them?..."

This is an obvious paradox that a person who knows the Prophet (S) as the Messenger of Allah and His

religion herald and considers his judgment as Allah's judgment, never thinks that he might do any oppression upon him.

Is it possible that Allah treats anyone unjustly? Is not oppression originating from ignorance, or need or conceit? Allah's holy realm is pure from all of them. The verse says:

"...Nay, but such are the unjust ones."

They did not want to be satisfied with what was their right, and because they knew the Prophet (S) would not grant any thing from others' rights to them, they would not succumb to his judgment.

What is Hypocrisy?

Hypocrisy is, in fact, a malady and deviation. A soundman has got only one face; his soul and body are in harmony; if he is a believer, his whole entity declares faith, and if he is a deviated person, both his appearance and inward declare his deviation.

But if his appearance professes faith and his inward declares paganism, this quality is a kind of disease, as Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 10 says:

"In their hearts is a disease, so Allah has increased their disease..."

In view of the fact that these people do not deserve Allah's guidance and favour, because they are obstinate and stubborn in their deeds and plans, Allah leaves them to themselves so that their disease increases.

Verily, the most dangerous people of a society are often hypocrites, for we do not know what to do with them, they are really neither friend nor seem enemy. They use the believers' facilities, and are apparently saved from pagans' punishment, but their deeds are worse than pagans'.

As we know, because this inconsistency in appearance and inward can not be continued for ever, finally curtains are drawn and their defiled inward will be shown, as in the former verses and their occasion of revelation we saw that when a case of judgment was formed, the cat was let out of the bag and their inward malice appeared.

Another matter is that, the government of justice is only Allah's government, for if man tries as much as possible to be free from conceit, animosity, kindness, and selfishness, he may get unconsciously involved in them, unless he is infallible and immune from the side of Allah.

It is for this reason that we say the real and true legislator is only Allah, because not only He knows all needs of man with His unlimited knowledge and He knows the best way for satisfying them, but also He never gets deviated because of needs, kindness and animosity.

The fairest judgments are carried out by Allah, the Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams. And the judgment of those who follow them is a little like theirs.

But this selfish man does not accept these fair and just judgments, and does not acknowledge these evenhanded rules, and he goes after a law, a government and a judgment that satiate his greed, avarice and lust more.

And what an interesting sentence is in the above verse:

"...Nay, but such are the unjust ones."

Meanwhile, facing such events is often a touchstone for evaluating man's true faith so that every man who is not straightforward will be facially dark.

1. Sura Isra', No. 17, verse 44
2. The Commentary Fakhr-i-Razi and Ruh ul-Bayan
3. Vol. 6, P. 109
4. From Encyclopedia Britannica
5. The Commentary of: Fakhr-i-Razi, Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Ruh-ul-Ma'ani
6. The Commentary by Qurtabi, and Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse
7. Majma'-ul-Bayan, Ruh-ul-Bayan, Tibyan, Qurtabi, Fakhr-i-Razi, Safi, Nur-uth-Thaqalyn

Section 7: Establishment of Islamic Dominion Promised

Sura An-Nur - Verses 51-52

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَي اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَن يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

وَمَن يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشَ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهِ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُونَ

51. "The saying of the believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that he may judge between them, is no other than that they say: 'We hear and we obey.' And those are they that are the successful."
52. "And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah, and is in awe of Him: so these are that are the victorious."

How hypocrites actually treated the judgment of the Prophet (S) was depicted in the previous four verses. In this holy verse, how the real believers treated him (S) is depicted so that people look at themselves and see, from the view point effacing the ordinance of Allah, to what group they belong.

In the previous holy verses we saw how dark-hearted hypocrites, who were in the dense darkness, reacted to the judgment of Allah and the Prophet (S), and how they refused the just judgment of the Prophet (S), as though they feared that Allah and the Prophet (S) might tread on their right.

But the concerned verses describe its opposite case, that is, the believers' treatment with this Divine judgment.

At first, it says:

"The saying of the believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that he may judge between them, is no other than that they say: 'We hear and we obey.'..."

What an interesting sentence,

"...We hear and we obey..."!

It is short and meaningful.

The Arabic word /'innama/ which is for limiting, indicates:

"...that they have nothing but this to say..."

They have only one word and verily the reality of Faith is this very meaning:

"...We hear and we obey..."

How can a person who knows Allah as the Omniscient, needing no one, the Compassionate, and the Merciful on all servants prefer others' judgment to His judgment? Also, how can that person show any action but listening to and obeying His command and judgments? What a good means it is for the believers' success and what great trial is for them!

Therefore in the end of the verse, it is added:

"...And those are they that are the successful."

The one who yields to Allah, and considers Him as the judge, is undoubtedly victorious in every thing, whether in the worldly life or in the spiritual one.

The second verse talks about the same fact, but more generally.

It proclaims:

"And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah, and is in awe of Him: so these are that are the victorious."

In this holy verse, those who obey and those who fear Allah are described as 'the victorious'; while in the previous verse those who yield to the judgment of Allah and the Prophet (S) were described as 'the successful'.

As it is understood from the references of lexicon, the Arabic word /fauz/ and the word /falah/ both have almost one meaning. Raqib says in Mufradat:

"The word /fauz/ Means: 'victory and achieving a good affair accompanied with safety', and concerning the word /falah/ he says it means: 'victory and achieving the purpose and aim'."

(Of course, the word 'Falah' originally means: 'to split'. Since victorious people surmount obstacles that are on their way and split their way for going forth and reaching their aim, the word 'Falah' has been used in the sense of victory.)

And since the last holy verse talks about obedience absolutely and the previous verse talks about the yielding to Allah's judgment, one of them is general and the other one is particular, the result of both of them must be the same.

It is interesting that, in the last verse, three attributes are mentioned for those who are victorious: opeying Allah (s.w.t.) and the Prophet (S), fear of Allah, and piety.

Some commentators say that 'obedience' is a general meaning and its inward branch is 'fear of Allah' and 'piety' is its outward branch. Thus, at first obedience is generally talked about, and then its inward branch and, after that, its outward one.

It is necessary to mention that there is a narration by Imam Baqir (as) about the commentary of the Qur'anic sentence:

"...And those are they that are the successful",

who said:

"The objective of this verse is Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as)."[1]

Undoubtedly, the most obvious extension of this verse is Imam Ali (as), and the purpose of the above tradition is this and it never rejects the commonness of its concept.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 53

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ أَمَرْتَهُمْ لَيَخْرُجُنَّ قُل لاَّ تُقْسِمُوا طَاعَةٌ مَّعْرُوفَةٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

53. “They have sworn by Allah the most earnest oaths** (**that**), **if you order them, they will certainly go forth. Say: ‘Do not swear;** (**better than this is**) **honourable obedience. Verily Allah is aware of what you do’.”

Do not trust any swear and oath, because hypocrites often abuse the sacred things, and prevent hypocrites' abuse by not accepting their oath and swear.

The occasion of revelation that is mentioned about this verse and the next one in some commentaries denotes that some hypocrites became very upset after the descending of the pervious verses and their severe reprimand.

They went to the Prophet (S) and swore their oath of obedience to his command, and then the holy Qur’an answered them decisively by saying:

“They have sworn by Allah the most earnest oaths** (**that**), **if you order them, they will certainly go forth. Say: ‘Do not swear;** (**better than this is honourable obedience. Verily Allah is aware of what you do’.”

Many commentators think that the purpose of the Qur’anic phrase /layaxrujunna/:

(***“…they will certainly go forth…”***)

is going out for Holy Struggle, while some others think that it means: leaving one’s house and family, or going with the holy Prophet (S) everywhere and to be at his service’.

Of course, the Arabic word /xuruj/ or its derivatives are used in the holy Qur’an in the sense of: both going out for Holy Struggle and leaving home, affairs, and family.

However, consistency with the previous holy verses, that mentioned the judgment of the Prophet (S) about the conflicting issues, necessitates that we accept the second commentary; meaning that: they came to the Prophet (S) and declared their yielding to his judgments and they swore that they not only would give a part of their property, but also they would leave all their property and family entirely, if command was issued.

Nevertheless, it causes no problem if both of the meanings are included in the verse, that is, they are ready both for leaving family and property with the command of the Prophet (S) and for going to Holy Struggle.

But, in view of the fact that those who are hypocritical sometimes change their appearance when they encounter unfavourable atmosphere of society and resort to very strong oaths and sometimes their oath itself indicates their falsehood, the holy Qur’an answers them explicitly, indicating that they need not swear, it is better they do sincere and frank obedience in action.

By the way, Allah is informed of what they have in their mind and He knows that whether they are swearing false oath or they have really changed their way.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 54

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فإِنَّمَا عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ وَعَلَيْكُم مَا حُمِّلْتُمْ وَإِن تُطِيعُوهُ تَهْتَدُوا وَمَا عَلَي الرَّسُولِ إِلاَّ الْبَلاَغُ الْمُبِينُ

54. "Say: 'Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, then on him is only what is imposed (on him), and on you is what is imposed on you; and if you obey him, you shall be on right guidance; and nothing is on the Messenger but the clear conveyance (of the Message)."

The Prophet (S) is commissioned to call hypocrites for obedience;

"Say: Obey Allah…",

because obeying the commands and orders of the Prophet (S) is obligatory like obeying Allah's orders and commandment.

Therefore, in this noble verse, this concept is emphasized where it says:

"Say: 'Obey Allah and obey the Messenger…"

Then the Holy Qur'an implies that there are two positions against this command, when it continues saying:

"…But if you turn away, then on him is only what is imposed (on him), and on you is what is imposed on you; and if you obey him, you shall be on right guidance; and nothing is on the Messenger but the clear conveyance (of the Message)."

He was commissioned to convey Allah's commandment to all people, whether they accept it or not. Detriment and benefit of accepting or rejecting it would influence them. The Prophet (S) was not obligated to force and compel people to go on the right path and accept the call.

It is interesting that in the above verse, the duties are referred to as being 'heavy loads'; it is in fact so. Both the commission of the Prophet (S) and frankly obeying his call were a burden on the shoulder that had to be carried out and except sincere people no one could carry out this duty.

Therefore, we read in a narration by Imam Baqir (as), about the Prophet (p.b.u.h), who said:

"Oh those who recite the Holy Qur'an! Be in awe of Allah, Almighty. Be pious toward His Book that is a burden on your shoulder, because both you and I are responsible. I am responsible for conveying His

message to you and you are responsible before Allah's Book and my practice (Sunnah) that are on your shoulder."

Some Points

1. The repetition of the Qur'anic phrase /'ati'u/ (Obey) indicates that the Prophet (S) has got two missions: one is declaration of revelation (Obey Allah) and the other one is declaring governmental rules (obey the Messenger).

2. In the holy Qur'an, we encounter some instances that contain two commandments from the side of Allah mentioned with together, and both of them must be carried out and doing one of them is not enough and is not acceptable, including:

A) Faith and deeds;

"...those who believe and do righteous deeds..."[2]

B) Ritual prayer and alms-tax;

"...And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates (Zakat).. ."[3]

C) Expressing gratitude to Allah and parents;

"...Be grateful to Me and to both your parents ..."[4]

D) Obeying Allah and His Messenger;

"...Obey Allah and obey the Messenger ..."[5]

3. In the holy Qur'an, the sentence/wa 'in tawallau/ (But if you turn away) is used many times. In all cases it is used for sympathizing with the Prophet (S) so that he would not get discouraged about his mission concerning people's inattention and heedlessness.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 55

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الاَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَي لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْناً يَعْبُدُونَنِي لاَ يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئاً وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

55. "Allah has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will certainly appoint them successors in the earth as He appointed successors those before them; and that He will certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that

certainly He will, after their fear, give them security in exchange. They will do worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me; and whoever disbelieves after this, then these are they that are evil-doers."

Occasion of Revelation

Many commentators, including Suyuti in Asbab-ul-Nuzul, Tabarsi in Majma'-ul-Bayan, Sayyid Qutb in Fi-Zilal, and Qurtabi in his commentary, upon the occasion of revelation of this verse have said:

When the Prophet (S) and Muslims migrated to Medina and were warmly welcomed by Ansar (Helpers), all Arabs became their enemy and it was such that they were to carry a weapon when they went to bed and to be on the alert all the time.

The continuation of this state became difficult for the Muslims. Some of them declared their feeling explicitly:

"To what day would this state continue? Would a time come that we could rest calmly in the night and peace and tranquility rule over us and we fear no one but Allah?"

The above verse was sent down and gave them this good tiding that of course such a day would come.

Islam is a universal religion. In future victory belongs to the believers and pagans are doomed to be defeated. The key of achieving the Truth and authority of the world is 'Faith' and 'good deeds'. Those who believe and do good deeds glad tidings of victory are given to, not to those who are barely believers.

Religion is not separated from politics, but politics and government are for saving religion.

Since the previous holy verses talked about obeying the commandments of Allah (s.w.t.) and the Prophet (p.b.u.h), the concerned verse continues this matter and mentions the result of this obedience which is the worldly government, and the Qur'an emphatically announces:

"Allah has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will certainly appoint them successors in the earth as He appointed successors those before them; and that He will certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that certainly He will, after their fear, give them security in exchange. They will do worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me..."

It is certain that after the dominion of the government of Monotheism and settlement of the Divine religion when any kind of anxiety, insecurity and infidelity disappear, those who

resist to be disbelievers are wrong-doers.

The verse continues saying:

“…and whoever disbelieves after this, then these are they that are evil-doers.”

However, the totality of the verse denotes that three things are promised by Allah to be bestowed on those Muslims who have faith and do good deeds:

1. Succession and authority over the earth.

2. Establishing the factual religion of Truth everywhere fundamentally, firmly, and deeply, (which is understood form the Qur’anic word ‘Tamkin’).

3. Abolishing all the factors that cause fear and insecurity.

The result of these abovementioned affairs will be worshipping Allah absolutely with utmost freedom, and obeying His commandments. There will be no partner for Him among people and pure monotheism will rule everywhere. Of course, we will explain that at what time this Divine promise has been fulfilled, or when it will be fulfilled.

Some Points

1. The Commentary of the Qur’anic Sentence

“…as He appointed successors those before them…”:

Commentators have different opinions about the matter that to whom this sentence refers that they had got authority on the earth before Muslims.

Some say that it refers to Adam, David and Solomon, because in verse 30 of Sura Al-Baqarah we read about Adam:

“…‘Verily I am appointing on the earth a deputy’…”.

And it is said about David in Sura Sad, No. 38, verse 26:

“ (And it was said unto him): O’ David! Verily We have set you a viceroy in the earth…”

And since Solomon was the heir of David’s authority, he became caliphate on the earth;

“And Solomon was David’s heir…”[6]

But some others, such as the great commentator ‘Allamah Tabatba’i said in Al-Mizan that this concept is improbable, because he does not consider the sentence /’allaḏina min qablihim/ (to those before them’) to be proper for prophets.

For this sentence has not been used for prophets in the Qur'an, therefore it refers to nations that were faithful and did good deeds and became the rulers on the earth.

However, some others believe that this verse refers to the Children of Israel who achieved authority on the earth when Moses (as) appeared and Pharaoh was defeated, as it is mentioned in Sura Al–'A'raf, No. 7, verse 137:

"And We made the people, who were abased, the inheritors to the east (parts) of the land and the west (parts) of it which We had blessed therein..."

It is also said about them (the believers of the Children of Israel):

"And to grant them power in the earth..."[7]

It is true that there were some wicked and insincere persons among the Children of Israel and even they might be pagan, but government was in the hand of the righteous believers, (therefore the fault that some commentators find with this commentary is rejected,) and, thus, the third commentary seems more correct.

2. To Whom Does Allah Promise?

In this verse we read that Allah has promised the authority of the earth, establishment of the chosen religion and complete security to those who are believers and do righteous deeds, but commentators are of different opinions about the extension of these persons:

Some of them say that it refers to the Companions of the Prophet (S), who ruled the earth after Islam and defeated pagans at the time of the Prophet (S).

(Of course, the purpose of the word 'Ard' (the earth) is not all of the earth or all countries, but it is a concept that is true about a part and the whole both.)

Some say it refers to the first four caliphates' authority. And some consider its meaning so wide–ranging that it includes all Muslims who have such an attribute.

Some say that it refers to government of Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance!), which includes western and eastern parts of the world and the religion of Truth will widespread. Fear and war will be abolished on the earth, and sincere worship will be materialized for all people of the world.

Undoubtedly this holy verse includes the first Muslims and certainly the full extension of this verse is the government of Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance!), which according to the opinion of all Muslims, whether Shi'ite or Sunni, will make the earth peaceful and full of justice after oppression and tyranny rule the world.

However, it is not against the generality and extensiveness of the concept of the verse.

So, whenever Muslims are verily faithful and do righteous deeds whole-heartedly, they will consequently achieve a strong and influential authority.

Some say that the word /'ard/ is absolute and general which includes all of the earth, but this is only limited to the government of Mahdi (may we get sacrificed for him!) and it is not consistent with the Qur'anic sentence /kamastaxlafa/ (as He granted it), because the predecessors' government and authority did not certainly include all of the earth.

Moreover, the occasion of revelation of the verse indicates that at least an example of such government was achieved for Muslims at the time of the Prophet (S), although it was at the end of his life.

But we repeat again that the product of all prophets' struggles and attempts, their continual propagation and pursuit and complete example of monotheism sovereignty, complete security, and sincere worship with no polytheism will be materialized when Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance!), the offspring of the prophets and the progeny of the Prophet of Islam (S), will reappear.

The same person about whom all Muslims have narrated this tradition from the Prophet (S) who said:

"If only one day of the world's lifetime is remained, Allah will make that day so long that a man from my progeny, whose name is like my name, will rule the earth and fill the earth with justice as it has been filled with oppression and tyranny."[8]

It is interesting that the Lale Tabarsi says about this verse that it is narrated from the household of the Prophet (S) (Ahl-ul-Bayt (as)) that:

"This verse is about Mahdi, who is from the family of the Prophet (S)."[9]

In Ruh-ul-Ma'ani and many other Shi'ite commentaries, upon the commentary of this verse, there has been narrated from Imam Sajjad (as) who said:

"By Allah, they are our Shi'ites (followers) (Ahl-ul-Bayt). Allah does this for them by the hand of a man who is from us and he is Mahdi (the guide) of the Ummah. He will fill the earth with justice and fairness as it has been filled with oppression and tyranny. He is the man about whom the Prophet (S) said:

'If one day of the world's lifetime has remained…'"

As we said, these commentaries do not mean to limit the meaning of the verse, however, they are for stating its full extension, but because some commentators, such as 'Alusi who has not pay attention to this matter in Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, have negated these traditions.

Qurtabi, the famous Sunni commentator, narrated from Miqdad-Ibn-'Aswad who heard from the Prophet (S), who said:

"No clay or stone house will remain unless Allah causes Islam enters that house (and faith and

monotheism get widespread on the earth.)"[10]

For more explanation about the government of Mahdi (as) and its vast and proven documents in Sunni and Shi‘ite books, you may refer to the book Muntakhab–ul–'Athar, PP. 247 on where they are taken especially from Sunni sources.

3. The Final Aim is Sincere Worship

The Qur'anic sentence /ya‘budunani la yušrikuna bi šay'a/ (They will do worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me) from the point of literature, whether its tense is present, or it is ultimate, its concept is that the final aim is establishing the government of Truth, embedding the religion of Truth, and spreading security and peace, which is the very fortifying the foundations of worshipping and monotheism, hi another verse of the Qur'an it is mentioned as the aim of creation, where it says:

"And I have not created the jinn and the humankind except that they should worship Me."[11]

A kind of worship which is the high education center of men that edifies their spirit and soul. The worship that Allah does not need but servants need it desperately for paving the path of perfection and development.

Therefore, Islamic insight, contrary to worldly approaches whose final aim is the extreme welfare of worldly life, does not follow such a thing as an aim, even the worldly life is valuable when it is used as a means for achieving that spiritual aim.

But we must pay attention to this matter that worshipping that lacks polytheism, and negates both none–divine laws and authority of low desires, is possible only by establishing a government of justice.

It is possible that you invite some persons to Truth by teaching, edification, and propagation, but for generalizing this matter in the society we must establish government of the righteous who are faithful.

That was why the great prophets attempted to do this, especially the Prophet of Islam (S), at the first possible opportunity, established such a government after migrating to Medina.

So it can also be concluded that all the attempts and struggles carried out for war and peace, and even educational, cultural, economic, military programs are planned in such a government are for the sake of worshipping Allah which is free from any polytheism.

It is also necessary to mention that the meaning of the righteous' government, obedience from the True religion and sincere worship is not a society that has no wrongdoer and sinner in it, but it means that the government is in the hand of the righteous believers and no public polytheism is seen in the society, otherwise, when man is free to choose his way and has got the freedom of will, it is possible to have deviated individuals in the man's best divine societies.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 56

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وءَاتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

56. "And establish prayer and pay the poor-rate and obey the Messenger, so that mercy may be shown to you."

Ritual prayer, alms-tax, and obeying divine leader is an obvious example of faith and righteous deed of the believers to whom sovereignty of the earth was promised in the former verse:

(***"Allah hath promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds…"***)

In Islam worshipping issues (ritual prayer), financial issues (alms-tax), and political and governmental issues (obeying Allah's prophet) are not separated from each other. So, in this verse, people are mobilized for preparing the ground for such a government.

At first, it says:

"And establish prayer…"

The same ritual prayer that is the key of relation between the Creator and creatures, and it guarantees their continuous connection with Allah, and it is an obstacle between them and corruption and wrong action.

Then, after that, the verse continues saying:

"…and pay the poor-rate…"

It is the same alms-rate that is the sign of relationship with Allah's creatures and it is an effective means for decreasing the distance between them and causes their affectionate relations to be strengthened.

So, the verse continues:

"…and obey the Messenger…"

This obedience, which is general and indicates that we should be obedient unto the Messenger of Allah in all things, causes us to be among the righteous believers who deserve to have the authority of the earth.

It is in this case and under the shade of fulfilling these commandments that haply we may find mercy, and be among those righteous believers who are worthy of leading the government of justice.

The verse concludes:

“...so that mercy may be shown to you.”

Some Traditions On Ritual Prayer and Alms-Tax

1. The Prophet (S) said:

“The first thing that Allah obligated upon my people to do was the five ritual prayers and the first deed of them that will ascend is the five ritual prayers, and the first thing that will be asked about is the very ritual prayers.”[12]

2. Imam Baqir (as) said:

“Islam is founded on five things: ritual prayer, amls-tax, ritual pilgrimage, fasting, and the guardianship (*of Ahl-ul-Bayt*)*”*[13]

3. Imam Sadiq (a.s) said:

“The first thing that a servant will be reckoned of is ritual prayer, so if ritual prayer is accepted, other deeds will be accepted. If his ritual prayer is not accepted, the rest of his deeds will be rejected, too.”

4. Imam Baqir (as) said:

“When our offspring become five years old, we enjoin them to perform ritual prayer, so when your issues get seven years old, tell them to keep up prayer.”[14]

5. The Prophet (S) said:

“Never the time of ritual prayer comes unless an angle cries:

O’ people stand up and put off the fires that you have kindled.’”[15]

6. Imam Ali (as) said:

“When a person stands up to perform ritual prayer, Satan looks at him jealously, for he sees that Allah’s mercy has covered him.”[16]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

“The five ritual prayers are like a pleasant stream that is before the door of your house. If someone washes oneself in it five times a day, no dirt will remain.”

(A person who performs five ritual prayers per day will be cleaned from any spiritual deviations.)[17]

8. The Prophet (S) said:

“Allah said:

‘(Oh Prophet!) I enjoined your people five ritual prayers and I promised with Me to send to Paradise everyone who protects them in their proper times, and there will not be promised with Me for the one who does not protect (perform) them’.”[18]

9. Imam Ali (as) said:

“I advise you to pay alms-tax. I heard the Prophet (S) saying:

“Alms-tax is the bridge of Islam. So whoever pays it will cross the bridge and whoever does not pay it will fall down of it, and (payment of) alms-tax soothes Allah’s wrath.”[19]

10. The narrator of the tradition says that he heard Imam Ali (as) saying:

“The pillars of Islam are three, and none of them is useful without the other ones: ritual prayer, alms-tax and guardianship.”[20]

11. The Prophet (S) said:

“Heal your patients with charity, and save (and insure) your property with alms-tax.”[21]

12. Imam Musa-Ibn-Ja‘far (as) said:

“Verily Alms-tax is set for being the food of the poor, and for increasing their wealth.”[22]

13. The Prophet (S) said:

“When alms-tax is not paid the earth holds back its (favours and) blessings.”[23]

14. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“The Prophet (S) has set alms-tax for 9 things, (which are) wheat, barley, date, raisin, gold, silver, camel, cow, and sheep, and let off other ones.”[24]

15. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Every Muslim is enjoined to pay alms (given on the festival of the end of Ramadan). One who does not pay it may expire.”

Then Imam was asked:

“What does expire mean?”

He said:

“Death.”[25]

Sura An-Nur - Verse 57

لاَ تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الاَرْضِ وَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

57. "Think not that the disbelievers can frustrate (Allah's plan) in the earth, their abode is the Fire and an evil destination it is!"

Even if pagans are super powerful, they will be defeated against Allah's religion.

In other words, if you think that powerful stubborn foes may throw a spanner in the works and may prevent the fulfilment of Allah's promise, this is impossible, because their power is nothing comparing with Allan's power.

Therefore, the verse says:

"Think not that the disbelievers can frustrate (Allah's plan) in the earth…"

Not only they will not be in security from the punishment of Allah in this world but also, in the Hereafter, Fire is their abode.

The verse continues saying:

"…their abode is the Fire and an evil destination it is!"

The Arabic word /mu'jizin/ is the plural form the word /mu'jiz/, meaning to make unable. Since sometime one is after someone and he escapes him and he goes out of pursuer's territory and this matter makes him (the pursuer) unable, this word /mu'jiz/ is sometimes used in the same meaning.

The above verse refers to this very meaning and it implies that no one can go out of Allah's territory.

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 616
2. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 25
3. Ibid, verse 43
4. Sura LuqmAn, No. 31, verse 14
5. The verse under discussion
6. Sura An-Naml, No. 27, verse 16
7. Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 6
8. In the book Muntakhab-ul-'Athar, 123 hadiths are mentioned about this matter and they are narrated from different Islamic references, especially from Sunni ones. Refer to this books from page 247 on.
9. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse
10. The Commentary by Qurtabi, following the verse
11. Sura Ath-Thariyat, No. 51, verse 56
12. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol, 7, Tradition No. 18859
13. Bihar, Vol. 82, p. 234

14. Wasa’il-ush-Shi‘ah, Vol. 3, p. 12
15. Bihar, Vol. 82, p. 209
16. Bihar, Vol. 82, p. 207
17. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, Vol, 7, Tradition No. 18931
18. Kanz-ul-‘Ummal, Vol, 7, Tradition No. 18872
19. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, Vol. 77, p. 407
20. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, Vol. 68, p. 386
21. Wasa’il-ush-Shi‘ah, p. 66
22. Ibid, p. 46
23. Wasa’il-ush-Shi‘ah, 146
24. Ibid, 34
25. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 109

Section 8: Respect For Domestic and Personal Privacy

Sura An-Nur - Verse 58

يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِيَسْتَأْذِنكُمُ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلاَثَ مَرَّاتٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلاَةِ الفَجْرِ
وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيابَكُمْ مِن الظَّهِيرَةِ وَمِن بَعْدِ صَلاَةِ الْعِشَآءِ ثَلاَثُ عَوْرَاتٍ لَكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلاَ عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ بَعْدَهُنَّ
طَوَّافُونَ عَلَيْكُم بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَي بَعْضٍ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

58. “O you who believe! Do let those whom your right hands possess, and those of you who have not reached to puberty, ask permission of you at three times (***for coming into your room***)***: before the morning prayer, and at midday when you put off your clothes, and after the night prayer.*** (***These are***) ***three times of privacy for you. It is no sin for you or for them*** (***if***) ***after those*** (***three times***)***, some of you go round attendant upon the others. Thus does Allah make clear the revelations for you; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.”***

Faithful parents are responsible for teaching Divine religious ordinances to their children. The place where parents habitually sleep must be separate and far from the sight of the children, otherwise, there was no need for taking permission, as man must allocate some hours for his wife during 24 hours and issues must not disturb them.

Islam is a religion for life and it is completely comprehensive. It has programs and plans for both common trivial issues such as entrance of children in parent’s room (mentioned in this verse) and important matters such as the establishment of universal government.

Anyway, as we said before, the most important issue that is comprehensively discussed in this Sura is the matter of public chastity and righting against any sexual deviation.

This verse also is about one of these affairs that relate this issue and it explains its characteristics; the matter is concerned to the mature and immature issues' taking permission when they want to enter the room which belongs to their parents.

At first, it says:

"O you who believe! Do let those whom your right hands possess, and those of you who have not reached to puberty, ask permission of you at three times** (**for coming into your room**)**: before the morning prayer, and at midday when you put off your clothes, and after the night prayer…"

As Raqib says in his book, Mufradat, and Firuz'abadi in Qamus, the Arabic word /zahirat/ means midday and about noontime when people take off their outer clothes and man and wife may be together privately.

"…** (**These are**) **three times of privacy for you…"

The Arabic word /'aurat/ originally is derived from the word /'ar/ meaning shame and fault. Since showing genital organs is the cause of fault and shame, in Arabic language it is called /'aurat/. Sometimes the word /'aurat/ is also used to mean an opening and cut in wall and dress and the like.

Sometimes it means absolutely fault. Anyway, using this word for these three times is for the matter that people do not compel themselves to be veiled fully as in other times they do and they consider these times their privacy.

It is obvious that this command only involves parents who must force their issues to do this, for children have not come of age yet so that they are not obligated to carry out divine duties, therefore parents are addressed here.

Moreover, the verse is applied to both girls and boys, and the word /'alla�ina/ (those) that is a masculine pronoun is not against generality of the concept of the verse, because in many cases this word is used for all people, as we read in the verse that obligates all Muslims to fast, in which the word /'alla�ina/ is used to address all Muslims.[1]

It is necessary to mention that the verse is about children who can discern and comprehend sexual issues and genital organs, etc, because the matter of taking permission itself indicates that they at least understand what taking permission means. Using the phrase 'Thalatha 'aurat' (Three times of privacy) is another evidence for this meaning, too.

Whether this verse covers male slaves only or it covers female slaves, too, there are various narrations. The verse apparently involves all, that is, it refers to both groups, so the narrations that are in harmony

with the appearance of the verse can be preferred.

In the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"...It is no sin for you or for them (if) after those (three times), some of you go round attendant upon the others. Thus does Allah make clear the revelations for you; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

The Qur'anic word /tawwafun/ is originally derived from the word /tawaf/, meaning walking about or around something, and since it is used in the form of exaggeration, it means frequency of this matter.

With regard to the Qur'anic phrase

/ba'dukum 'ala ba'din/ (some of you ... upon others)

that has come after it, the concept of the sentence is that you are allowed to do each other favour and to go and to come in other than these three times.

As Fazil Mighdad says in Kanz-ul-'Irfan, this sentence indicates that there is no need for taking permission in other times, because if they want to come and go frequently and they have to take permission, every time it will become a difficult job[2].[3]

Sura An-Nur - Verse 59

وإِذَا بَلَغَ الاَطْفَالُ مِنكُمُ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَأْذِنُوا كَمَا اسْتَأْذَنَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَاتِه وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

59. "And when the children among you reach puberty then let them ask permission even as those before them used to ask it. Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you. Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise."

Wet dream is a boundary of reaching the religious puberty.

The Arabic word /hulum/ and the word /'ihtilam/ means to see a wet dream when one is sleeping, and it is one of the signs of puberty. Of course, the signs of puberty for girls and boys are various and they are mentioned in detail in the treatises of authorities of imitation.

In this holy verse the ordinance of those who have reached puberty is mentioned.

It says:

"And when the children among you reach puberty then let them ask permission even as those before them used to ask it. ..."

The Arabic word /hulum/ means ‘intellect’ and implies puberty which is usually accompanied with an intellectual and mental mutation. It is sometimes said that the word /hulum/ means ‘dream’ and ‘dreaming’, and since, after puberty, the youth see some scenes in dream that cause them ejecting semen, this word has been used to mean puberty ironically.

Anyway, it is understood from this verse that the ordinance for those who have reached puberty is different from those who have not reached this status, because immature children are obligated to take permission only in three times, according to the previous verse, since their life is so mixed with their own parent’s that if they want to take permission every time, it will cause them difficulty.

Moreover, their sexual feelings are still undeveloped, but according to this verse, which has obliged them to take permission absolutely, matured youth in any condition must take permission every time they go to their parents.

This ordinance is for the place where parents are taking rest, otherwise, entering public room (if there is such a room), especially when others are there and there is nothing to cause problem, needs no permission.

It is also important to mention that the Qur’anic sentence:

“...even as those before them used to ask it...”

refers to the adults who were obligated to take permission whenever they wanted to enter their parents’ room and, in this verse, those who have just reached puberty are like the adults who were enjoined to ask permission.

In order to emphasize and attract the attentions, at the end of the verse, it says:

“...Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you. Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise.”

This is just like the sentence that was at the end of the previous verse, but in that holy verse the word /al’ayat/ (the revelations) was used and in this verse the word /’ayatihi/ (His revelations) is used. However, there is not much difference in their meanings.

Some Details About Philosophy of Taking Permission:

Only giving heed to executing fixed punishments and flogging wrongdoers is not enough to eradicate a social mischief such as immodest unchaste actions. Such a treatment does not produce a good result in any one of social issues.

In fact we must have a package which includes intellectual cultural teachings, which is along with ethical and sentimental rules and correct Islamic teachings, and we must also create a sound social environment and then punishment can be considered as a factor along with them.

Consequently, this holy Sura, which is the Sura of chastity, begins with the act of flogging and punishment of adulterer and adulteress, and covers the issues such as paving ground for a sound marriage, observing Islamic veiling, prohibiting ogling, banning the act of accusing people to unchaste pollution, and, finally, children's taking permission at the time of entering parents' room.

This shows that no subtle thing about chastity is ignored in Islam.

Servants must take permission when they want to enter a room in which wife and husband exist. Matured children must take permission when they want to enter such a room, even immature children, who are always with parents, are also taught not to enter the parents' room without permission at least at three special times, (before morning ritual prayer, after night prayer, and at noon time when parents are taking rest).

This is a kind of Islamic politeness which is unfortunately observed less today. Although the holy Qur'an has mentioned it explicitly in the above holy verses, we see that this Islamic ordinance and its philosophy is less discussed in lectures and writings and it is not clear that why this decisive ordinance of the holy Qur'an has been ignored.

Although the verse apparently obligates people to observe this ordinance, even if we suppose that this ordinance is recommended, it must be talked about and its details must be discussed.

Contrary to what some simple-minded individuals, who think that children do make nothing of these issues and servants do not pay attention to them, it is proven that children (let alone adults) are extraordinarily sensitive to this matter and sometime parents' carelessness and children looking at scenes that they must not see, are the source of ethical deviations and even psychical maladies.

We have experimented the individuals who themselves confessed that as a result of the carelessness of their parents to this matter and that they observed them busy having a sexual intercourse those individuals had reached such a stage of sexual stimulation and psychical complex that they felt the enmity of their parents in them, nigh to kill them or perhaps, nigh to commit self-murder.

It is here that the value and magnificent of this Islamic ordinance appears that the issues and matter that scientists have found today, Islam foresighted in its ordinances fourteen centuries ago.

It is also necessary to recommend parents to take these matters earnest and to make their children accustomed to taking permission of entrance. They also must avoid actions, such as sleeping together in a room discerning children sleep, which may excite children as much as possible. You must know that these affairs have got extraordinarily educational effect on children's fate.

It is interesting that there is a tradition from the Prophet (S) who said:

"Be careful that you do not have sexual intercourse while a child is looking at you from cradle."[4]

Sura An-Nur - Verse 60

وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النّسَآءِ اللاَّتِي لاَ يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحاً فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَ جُنَاحٌ أَن يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ وَأَن يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَهُنَّ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

60. "And** (**as for**) **women advanced in years, who have no hope of marriage, it is no sin for them if they put off their** (**outer**) **clothes in such a way as not to show adornment. And if they refrain themselves, it is better for them; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Islam rules are in accord with realties, necessities, needs, and social abilities. Therefore we should slacken it for an old woman who does not have inclination for husband and does not apply cosmetics.

Thus in this verse an exception for the ordinance of the veil of women is mentioned by which exempts old women from this ordinance. It says:

"And** (**as for**) **women advanced in years, who have no hope of marriage, it is no sin for them if they put off their** (**outer**) **clothes in such a way as not to show adornment..."

In fact, there are two conditions for this exception:

1. Reaching an age in which there is usually no hope of marriage in them. In other words, they have lost any sexual attraction completely.

2. They should not have any cosmetics when they take away their veil.

It is clear that with these two conditions there will be no mischief when veil is discarded in them. For this reason Islam exempts them from this ordinance.

It is also obvious that its purpose is not to be naked and to take off all clothes, but it means to remove outer garments that in some narrations it has been interpreted into veil (chador) and scarf.

In a tradition Imam Sadiq (as) about this verse says:

"The purpose (*of it*) *is veil* (*chador*) *and scarf."*

The narrator says he asked Imam:

"Before every one?"

Imam said:

"Before every one, but she must not apply cosmetics and she must not wear adornments."[5]

Some other narrations with the same content are narrated from Imams, Ahl-ul-Bayt (as).[6]

It is added at the end of the verse implying that yet if they refrain and cover themselves it is better for them, because from the view point of Islam the more a woman observes her veiling and chastity, she will be more admirable, pious, and pure.

The verse says:

"...And if they refrain themselves, it is better for them..."

Since some old women may misuse this calculated and lawful freedom and so have possibly improper talking with men and have impure thoughts altogether, in the end of the verse, as a warning, it says:

"...and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

He hears what is told and He knows what is in the hearts and what is in minds.

In short, the matter of veiling is one of the stable and necessary ordinances of Islam, but the issues of how the veil should be is depended on the matter of not stirring sexual desires and saving chastity and modesty.

So, the principle that this group of women are excepted from the ordinance of veiling is not a matter of discussion among Islam scholars and learned people, because the text of the Qur'an expresses it, but there are some words about its characteristics, including: the age of these women, in what age the ordinance of 'women advanced in years' covers women.

In some Islamic narration, it has been interpreted as old women.[7] While in other narrations it has been interpreted as women retirement from marriage.[8] But some Islamic jurists and commentators think that it means the end of menstruation, the age of barrenness and people's reluctance to marry such women.[9]

Apparently, all of these meanings refer to one reality that women must get so old that no one would like to marry them, although some of such women may rarely get married.

Moreover, about the part of the body that these women can show, there are some different interpretations in Islamic Traditions, while the Holy Qur'an says vaguely that there is no problem for such women to take off their garments, of course, their outer clothes.

In some narrations we read the answer of this question that which garments can be taken off;

Imam Sadiq (as) has said:

"Chador."[10]

While in other narration it has been interpreted as chador and scarf.[11]

Apparently, there is no inconsistency between these Islamic traditions. The purpose is that there is no problem for such women to uncover their head and to bare their hair, neck, and face. Even in some traditions and jurists' words, the wrist is exempted, but we have no reasons about more than this very extension for its exemption.

Anyway, all of these are for the time that such women do not apply cosmetics, and to cover their hidden adornments as others are enjoined to do. Also they must not wear garments that attract attentions and, in other words, they are permitted to go out without (chador) and scarf while wearing a simple garment and without applying cosmetics.

Yet, this ordinance is not obligatory, but if they do veil themselves as other women do, it is more preferred, as it is explicitly mentioned in the end of the verse, because there is the possibility of deviation and offence in such people, although very rarely.

Sura An-Nur – Verse 61

لَيْسَ عَلَي الاَعْمَي حَرَجٌ وَلاَ عَلَي الاَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلاَ عَلَي الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَلاَ عَلَي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَن تَأْكُلُوا مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ أَوْبُيُوتِ ءَابَآئِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخَوَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَعْمَامِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ عَمَّاتِكُمْ أَوْبُيُوتِ أَخْوَالِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ خَالاَتِكُمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكْتُم مَّفَاتِحَهُ أَوْ صَدِيقِكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَأْكُلُوا جَمِيعاً أَوْأَشْتَاتاً فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُم بُيُوتاً فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَي أَنفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ مُبَارَكَةً طَيِّبَةً كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الاَيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

61. "There is no blame upon the blind nor any blame upon the lame nor any blame upon the sick nor on yourselves that you eat from your houses, or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers, or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers' brothers, or the houses of your fathers' sisters, or the houses of your mothers' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or (from that) whereof you hold the keys, or (from the house) of your friend. No sin shall it be for you whether you eat together or apart. But when you enter houses, salute one another with a greeting from Allah, blessed and good. Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you, so that you might understand."

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Before Islam the blind, the lame and the sick were not allowed to eat food with healthy people. This verse permitted them to eat food in group, with healthy people or if they wanted they could eat food lonely."[12]

Anyway, since the previous verses talked about taking permission at certain times or when entering special place of parents, the concerned verse is, in fact, an exception from this ordinance, indicating that a group can enter their relatives' home and the like in certain conditions and without taking permission, and they can even eat food without having permission.

At first, the verse says:

“There is no blame upon the blind nor any blame upon the lame nor any blame upon the sick nor on yourselves that you eat from your houses...”

According to some narrations, before converting to Islam, the people of Medina prevented the blind, the lame and the sick to eat with them at a table. They did not eat with those people and they hated such a matter.

And, on the contrary, after Islam some people thought that this kind of people must eat lonely, not because they hated eating with them, but maybe because they thought that the blind could not see the existing good food while they could and they ate, which was against ethics, and also the lame and the sick were not as fast in eating as healthy people were so they tarried.

Anyway, they did not eat food with such people for any reason they had , so the blind, the lame and the sick withdrew themselves, because it was possible that they caused others to worry and also thought that this was a sin.

This matter was presented to the Prophet (S) and this verse was sent down, indicating that there is no blame upon the blind, nor any blame upon the lame nor any blame upon the sick, nor on yourselves that you eat food with together.[13]

The writer of Jawami‘-ul-Jami‘ says: In the advent of Islam, some of believers brought the disabled and the afflicted persons to the houses of their wives, to the houses of their own offsprings, their relatives’ houses, and their friends’ houses, and they fed them.

Gradually these believers thought that this job might be counted a sin for them, and so they avoided this deed. Then this verse was sent down and indicated that this deed is not as sin.

The purpose of:

“There is no blame ... nor on yourselves...”

is that there is no heaviness and sin for you and for the believers who are like you.

Some have said that the sick and the poor did not eat and associate with other people, because they thought people might not like their company.

Some others have said that when Muslims wanted to go to war, they gave the key of their houses to the disabled so that these people could eat whatever they found in those houses. But they thought that this interference might be unlawful for them, then they avoided eating food of their houses. Then Allah said that there is no blame on them and you in this eating.

Then the holy Qur’an adds implying that there is not any blame on yourselves if you eat from these

houses without permission: from your houses, (the objective is the children and wives which have been rendered into 'your houses').

The verse continues:

"...or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers, or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers' brothers, or the houses of your fathers' sisters, or the houses of your mothers' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or (from that) whereof you hold the keys, or (from the house) of a friend. No sin shall it be for you whether you eat together or apart..."

It seems that, at the advent of Islam, some Muslims avoided eating food lonely and if they could not find anyone as company for eating food, they would remain hungry for a time. Then the Qur'an taught them that eating lonely, or with other persons, is lawful.[14]

Some commentators have also said that some Arabs believed that, as a respect, the food of their guest must be served separately and they ought not to be with him during eating food (lest the guest might become shy or feel uneasy). This verse removed these considerations and taught them that this was not an admirable custom.[15]

Another group of commentators have said that some people believed that the poor must not eat with the rich, and class division must be observed even at the time of eating food. The holy Qur'an rejected this wrong and unjust custom with the above sentence.

There is no problem if this verse refers to all of above affairs. Then the verse refers to another ethical matter, where it says:

"...But when you enter houses, salute one another with a greeting from Allah, blessed and good..."

And finally it says:

"...Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you, so that you might understand."

That which houses are the purpose of the Qur'anic word /buyut/ (houses), some say that it refers to 11 houses that are mentioned in above.

Some others say it refers specially to mosques. But, as it is clear, the verse is unconditional and it embraces all houses, including those 11 ones which a person enters for eating food, or other houses such as: friends' houses and relatives' houses and so on, because there is no reason for limiting the vast concept of the verse.

There are some commentaries on the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: /fa sallimu 'ala 'anfusikum/

‘saluting one another’:

Some say that it means ‘to salute one another’ as in the story of the Children of Israel the holy Qur’an says /faqtulu ’anfusakum/:

“...and slay one another (***the wrong doers***)...”![16]

Some commentators say that , it means to greet to wife, issues and family, because they are considered as man himself and therefore, it is stated in the verse in the form of/’anfus/.

In the verse of mutual cursing (Sura ’Al–i–‘Imran, No. 3, verse 61) we see such a meaning, and it shows that sometime when a person gets relationally closed to one another the word /’anfus/ (self, man himself) will be used, as Imam Ali’s closeness to the Prophet (S) is stated in this way.

Some commentators say that this verse refers to the houses in which no one lives and when one wants to enter them one salutes himself with this sentence:

“Our greeting and peace will be from our Lord.”

or

“Our peace be upon us and upon Allah’s righteous servants, ”

We think there is not any inconsistency between these commentaries; entering every home we must salute, believers must salute believers, household must salute each other, if there is no one we must salute ourselves, because all of these, in fact, refer to saluting oneself.

On the commentary of this verse, Imam Baqir (as) said:

“The purpose of saluting household at the time of entering home is that they will naturally answer him and returns peace and salutation on himself, and this is saluting oneself.”[17]

Again, Imam Baqir (as) said:

“When a person enters his home and sees some one there so he must salute him (*or her*)*, and if there is no one there, he must say, peace be upon us from Allah, as Allah has said in the holy Qur’an:*

‘...a greeting from Allah, blessed and good...’”[18]

Some Points

1. Do we not need to take permission for eating others’ food? As the above verse has mentioned, Allah has permitted man to eat food from close relatives’ houses and some friends’ houses and such like (on the whole these houses are 11).

In this verse taking permission was not mentioned as its condition and certainly it does not need taking permission, because when permission is taken we can eat everyone's food and it will not be limited to these 11 houses. But, is obtaining inward consent necessary as a condition because of intimacy and close acquaintance that is between two parties?

The holy verse apparently rejects this condition, too, and considers it enough if only he or she is likely consent.

But if the status of two parties is in a way that certainly there is no assent, although the verse apparently includes all cases from this viewpoint, it is not impossible that the verse excludes such a case, especially when such people are rare and general applications do not cover these rare people.

Therefore, the above verse particularizes, in a certain field, verses and narrations that limit using others' property to having permission from their owners save in a special boundary; but we repeat that this particularization is inside a certain field, such as eating food as it is necessary and without immoderation.

What was said above is well known among our Islamic jurists and some of it is mentioned explicitly in narrations from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as).

We read in an authentic narration that when Imam Sadiq (as) was asked about the Qur'anic phrase /'a sadiqikum/ (or of a friend), he said:

"By Allah! Its purpose is that man enters his friend's (brother's) home and eats food without having permission."[19]

There are numerous narrations mentioned that have the same concept and in them it is said that taking permission is not necessary in these cases.

On 'lack of corruption and immoderation', some narrations have also mentioned it explicitly.[20]

The only thing that remains is a narration that is about this matter. It says:

"Only special nutritional materials can be eaten, not every food."

But since this narration is objected by Islamic jurists, its document would not be valid.

Some Islamic jurists have excepted some foods which are superior and special, and possibly the landlord has kept for himself or for an honored guest or for some particular times. It is not impossible that the verse excepts this case.[21]

2. The philosophy of this Islamic ordinance:

Comparing with other severe divine ordinances that prohibit usurpation, this ordinance may raise question how Islam permits such a thing while it is very exact and fastidious in the issue of usurping

others’ property.

We think that this question is proper for fully material environments, such as western societies, in which parents may force their children to go out of their house when they become a little old! And when parents get old and disable, they will be dismissed!

They do not want to be kind and gratitude towards them, because in those societies all affairs are based on economical and financial relationships and usually humane sentiments do not exist.

With regard to the Islamic culture and humane profound sentiments, especially between the members of the family, relatives and particular friends, which dominate this culture, there is nothing to get surprised at.

In fact, Islam considers close relationships of relatives and friends as being superior to these issues. This, in fact, indicates the ultimate friendship and peacefulness that must dominate an Islamic society, and conceits, exclusionisms, and selfishness must be wiped out from it.

Undoubtedly, the ordinances of usurpation exist in fields other than this, but in this special field Islam gives priority tosentimental issues and humane relationships and it is, in fact, an example for other relations of relatives and friends.

3. Who does /sadiq/ mean?

Undoubtedly friendship and friendliness has got a vast meaning, and here its purpose is certainly those special and close friends that have very close relationship with each other and whose relation necessitates going to each other’s house and to eat from their food.

In such cases, as we said before, there is no need for being sure about the consent of other party, if only someone is not sure about the discontentment of that one, this will be enough.

Thus some commentators have said about this phrase that the purpose is a friend who treats sincerely with you in his friendship. Some others say that the purpose is a friend that usually has outwardly and inwardly the same relation with you. Apparently, all of these statements refer to one matter.

Meanwhile, in short, it gets clear that those who are not in this extent generous and forgiving toward their friends, are not in fact friend.

It is appropriate here to mention a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who declared comprehensive conditions of friendship and its vast concept.

He (as) said:

“Friendship is materialized only when its conditions and terms are met. Count a person who has all of these terms, or some of them, as friend. And a person who has nothing of these terms is not a friend.

(*Conditions and terms of friendship*)

A) *His outward and inward are the same for you.*

B) *He considers your honour, reputation, and enhancement as his and he counts your fault and gracelessness as his.*

C) *His rank, wealth and status do not change his position toward you.*

D) *He does not withhold from you what he can do.*

F) *A person who has got all of the above attributes does not leave you alone when you are down on your luck."*[22]

4. The commentary of /mamalaktum mafatihahu/ ('(***from that***) ***whereof you hold the keys***'):

In some occasions of revelation we read that at the advent of Islam, when Muslims went to war, they sometimes gave the key of their house to the disabled who could not fight and even permitted them to eat whatever food was in the house, but they avoided eating food, because they thought that this might be sin.

According to this narration, the purpose of this phrase is

'the houses that you have become the owner of whose keys'[23]

It has been narrated from Ibn Abbass who said the purpose of this sentence is man's lawyer or agent due to his domestic animals, farming, ground, and water. Such person is permitted to eat fruit from the garden and to drink milk from the animals as much as he needs. Some others also have interpreted it as storekeeper who has the right to eat some of the foodstuff.

But, with regard to other groups that are mentioned in this verse, it seems that the purpose of the phrase is those who give the key of their house to other person for the sake of close relationship and trust. Their close relationship has caused them to be like close relatives and friends, whether he is formally lawyer or not.

If we read in some narrations that this phrase has been interpreted as a lawyer who is responsible for someone's property, it is, indeed, only expressing the extension of the meaning and it is not limited to it.

5. Salutation and greeting:

As we said before, the Arabic word /tahiyat/ is derived from the word /hayat/ (life) and it means to pray for someone's health and life, whether this prayer is in the form of 'Salamun 'Alaykum' (peace on you), or 'As-Salamu 'Alayna' (Peace on us), or 'Hayyaka Allah' (Allah salutes you).

But usually every kind of expression of kindness that is done in the beginning of a meeting is called 'Tahiyyat'.

The purpose of the sentence:

"...a greeting from Allah, blessed and good..."

is to join greeting with Allah in a way, that is, the purpose of 'Salamun 'Alaykum' will be that 'Allah salutes you' or 'I ask Allah your health.", because in the opinion of a believer every prayer that is in this form is both full of blessings (Mubarak) and pure (Tayyib).

Some Islamic traditions on salutation and its importance and obligation to answer every kind of greeting:

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"The stingiest person is the one who is reluctant to salute (and to greet), and the most generous person is one who spends his wealth and his life in the path of Allah."[24]

2. The Prophet (S) said:

"Salutation is recommended and answering salutation is obligatory."[25]

3. Imam Hussayn (as) said:

"Salutation has got 70 good points of which 69 belong to one who begins salutation and one belongs to one who answers it."[26]

4. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

" (This is the sign) of modesty that you salute to whom you meat."

5. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"One who starts saluting is more prior to (have the blessing and favour of) Allah and the Prophet (S)."

6. Imam Rida (as) said:

"One who salutes the poor in a way that is different from the way he salutes the rich will meet Allah, Almighty and Glorious, on the Day of Hereafter while He is angry at him."[27]

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"The stingiest individual is one who meets other Muslim and does not salute him."[28]

8. Imam Ali (as) said:

"When someone salutes you, you salute him in a better way, and when someone confers you a blessing, you confer him a better blessing. But prior is the one who has started saluting and offering blessing."[29]

1. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 83
2. Kanz-ul-'Irfan, Vol. 2, P. 225
3. If we look one more time to this Sura from the beginning, we find that the policy of prevention from indecency is behind its verses. For example, adulterer and adulteress should be punished before others' eye (verse 1), their marriage is limited (verse 3), if without four witnesses false accusation is made, 80 stripes should be beaten (verse 4), those who falsely accuse the Prophet's wife will be severely chastised (verse 11), if you heard a false accusation, you must deal with it (verse 12), if one likes spreading indecency, he will be severely chastised in couple (verse 19), do not follow the steps of satan (verse 21) those who accuse pure women falsely will be roughly punished (verse 23), the foul language is uttered by the wicked persons not you (verse 26), do not enter others' house without taking permission and if they say you must return, you must accept and go back (verses 27-28), men and women must not gaze at the one who is within forbidden degrees (verses 30-31), women must not show their ornaments and must not dance everywhere and you must try for the marriage of those who are celibate and you must not fear from poverty (verse 32), and in this verse, your children and slaves must not enter your private room at times when you are at your ease and alone with your wife. Yes, all these commands are for preventing immodesty and immature puberty and saving face and decency.
4. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 103, p. 295
5. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, the book of An-Nikah, Vol. 14, p. 147, Ch. 110
6. For more explanation refer to the above book (the same reference)
7. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, the book of An-Nikah, C. 110, Tradition No. 4
8. The above book
9. Jawahir, Vol. 29, p. 85, and Kanz-ul-'Irfan, Vol. 2, p. 226
10. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, the book of An-Nikah, C. 110, Tradition No. 1
11. The above book, Traditions 2 & 3
12. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary
13. Dur-ul-Manthur and Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, following the verse. A part of other commentators also have mentioned this narration in their books such as: Tabarsi in Majma'-ul-Bayan, the deceased Fiyd in Tafsir-us-Safi, Fakhr-i-Razi in Tafsir-ul-Kabir, and Shaykh Tusi in Tibyan.
14. Tibyan, the Commentary, following the verse
15. Ibid
16. Sura Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 54
17. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, vol. 3, p. 627
18. Ibid
19. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 16, p. 434, the book of "At'imah wa Ashribah", chapters of 'Adab-ul-Ma'idah, C. 24, Tradition No. 1
20. Ibid
21. For more explation refer to the book Jawahir-ul-Kalam, Vol. 36, p. 406
22. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 467
23. Qurtabi, the Commentary, following the verse
24. Bihar, Vol. 73, p. 12
25. Ibid
26. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 471
27. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 5, p. 442
28. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 12
29. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, Translated by Fiydul-Islam, p. 1114

Section 9: Not to Act Without Apostle's Permission

Sura An-Nur – Verse 62

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِذَا كَانُوا مَعَهُ عَلَي أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوا حَتَّي يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِذَا اسْتَأْذَنُوكَ لِبَعْضِ شَأْنِهِمْ فَأْذَن لِمَن شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمُ اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

62. "Only these are the** (true) **believers who believe in Allah and His messenger and, when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they go not away until they have asked leave of him. Verily those who ask leave of you, are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger. So, if they ask your leave for some affair of theirs, give leave to whom you please of them, and ask forgiveness of Allah for them. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Occasion of Revelation

In commentaries there are many things mentioned about the occasion of revelation of this verse that we present to you some of them:

1. Some say that this verse is about Hanzaleh in whose wedding night the commandment of holy war was issued. He took permission from the Prophet (S) to go home for doing the ceremony of wedding night. Because of shortage of time, he went to battle-field without taking legal bath and then he became martyr.

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Angles did bathe him."

After sleeping only that night with his wife, Allah gave Hanzaleh a child whose history is lengthy.[1]

2. Some other commentators say that this verse is about the hypocrites who performed ritual prayer when they were with people and if no one saw them and they were alone, they did not perform ritual prayer.[2]

3. A group of commentators say that this verse is about some persons who were ordered by the Prophet (S) to do a job, but they did their personal jobs.

4. Some say that this verse is about those Muslims who were busy digging a moat and took permission

from the Prophet (S) for visiting their family.

Being with godly leader for helping him and solving problems is the sign of faith, and leaving him alone is the sign of hypocrisy and weakness of faith. In social life, the existence of a leader and following him is necessary.

How this verse is related to other previous verses, some commentators, including the deceased Tabarsi in Majma'ul-Bayan and the writer of Fi Zilal, have said that because the previous verses talked about the way of association with friends and relatives, the current verse talks about the way of Muslims' association with their leader and puts emphasis on observing regulations before him so that they obey him in every thing, and, even in many important affairs, without his permission they should not leave the group.

Another probability is that: in some former verses the necessity of obeying Allah and the Prophet (S) was mentioned and one of its conditions was that without his permission Muslims should not do anything, therefore, the verse under discussion talks about this matter.

Anyway, in the beginning of the verse it says:

"Only these are the (true) believers who believe in Allah and His messenger and, when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they go not away until they have asked leave of him..."

The purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: /'amrin jami'/ (some common errand) is any important affair that necessities gathering of people and their cooperation and help, whether this issue is a crucial matter of consultation or a matter of holy war and fighting with foe, or Friday prayer in very critical conditions, and such like.

Therefore, if we see that some commentators interpreted it as consultation about holy war or Friday prayer and feast prayer, we must say that they have referred to some part of the meaning of the verse, and the previous occasions of revelation are the extensions of this general ordinance.

This is in fact a disciplinary order or command that no united group or society can ignore it, because in such conditions, the absence of one person can cost a bomb and harms the ultimate aim, especially when the chief of the group is Allah's messenger and a sagacious, influential spiritual leader.

Paying attention to this matter is important that the purpose of taking permission is not that everyone takes permission superficially and goes after his own job, but he must really take permission; that is, if the leader sees that his absence is insignificant, he permits him to go, otherwise, he must not go and sometimes he must forfeit his personal and private job to a more important aim.

Thus, following this matter, the Qur'an adds implying that those who ask you permission and their belief in Allah and His Messenger is not a mere oral one, but they obey you and Allah's commandment with

their soul and spirit, then give them leave.

The verse says:

"...Verily those who ask leave of you, are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger. So, if they ask your leave for some affair of theirs, give leave to whom you please of them..."

It is clear that such faithful persons have gathered for an important affair and they would not take permission for a trivial matter; and the purpose of the holy phrase /ša'nihim/, mentioned in this verse, is some important and necessary jobs.

On the other hand, the will of the Prophet (S) does not mean he issued permission without considering conditions and consequence of individuals' absence, but this means that the leader is free to prevent people from going away if he thinks that their presence is vital.

The evidence of this matter is verse 43 of Sura At-Taubah, No.9 in which the holy Prophet (S) was reprimanded for giving permission to some persons, where it says:

"May Allah pardon you! Why did you give them leave before you had found out those who spoke the truth and before you had known the liars?"

This verse shows that even the Prophet (S) must be careful in giving permission to individuals and he must count the cost and he is divinely responsible.

In the end of the verse, concerning when giving them permission, it says:

"...and ask forgiveness of Allah for them. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Now the question is that why forgiveness. Were they still wrongdoers while they asked the permission of the Prophet (S)?

There are two ways for answering this question: first, although they were allowed to their jobs, they gave more priority to their personal and private jobs than Muslims' common job and this was not free from a kind of leaving the better[3] and, therefore, they needed forgiveness (like asking forgiveness for a disapproved action).

Moreover, this matter shows that Muslims must not ask permission as much as possible and they must be altruistic and benevolent, because after taking permission their action is abandonment of what is primary, lest trivial matters are considered as excuses of leaving important jobs and works.

The other matter is that they deserve Allah's favour, because of their politeness toward their leader, and the Prophet (S) asks Allah's forgiveness as thanking them.[4]

Anyway these two answers are not inconsistent, and both of them may be the purpose of the verse.

Of course, these two very important Islamic disciplinary commands are not limited to the Prophet (S) and his companions, but this is true about all Divine leaders including prophet, Imam and the scholars who are their successors to observe them, for the issue of Muslims' destiny and Islamic society is under consideration in it.

Even, in addition to the commandment of the glorious Qur'an, it is based on reason and logic, for no organization and group remains without observing this principle, and correct management is impossible without it.

It is really strange that some famous Sunni commentators consider this holy verse as an evidence for exertion and leaving the judgment to religious jurist's opinion, but it must be said that the exertion that is mentioned in the discussions of fundamental dogmas and jurisprudence is about religious ordinances and not about subjects.

No one can reject exertion in subjects and the opinion of every commander and every chief and manager in deciding about executive issues is respected, but this does not mean that we can use independent reasoning in general ordinances of religion and reject or enact an ordinance according to the benefit and interest.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 63

لاَ تَجْعَلُوا دُعَآءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَآءِ بَعْضِكُم بَعْضاً قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ يَتَسَلَّلُونَ مِنكُمْ لِوَاذاً فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَن تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

63. "Make you not the calling of the Messenger among you as your calling one of another. Allah does know those of you who steal away, hiding themselves. Therefore let those who go against His order beware lest a trial afflicts them or a painful punishment befalls them."

Divine leadership has got realm which must be respected and has got high status. Both his name must be called politely and his orders must be obeyed with whole entity, and his call must not be equaled to that of others.

Thus, in this verse, in connection with the commandments of the Prophet (S), it says:

"Make you not the calling of the Messenger among you as your calling one of another…"

When he calls people for an issue, which is certainly divinely and religiously important, his call must be counted as vital and important and it must be always paid attention to. His invitations and calls must not be taken simply for his command is Allah's command and his call is Allah's.

Then, the verse continues saying:

"…Allah does know those of you who steal away, hiding themselves. Therefore let those who go against His order beware lest a trial afflicts them or a painful punishment befalls them."

The Arabic word /yatasallalun/ is derived from the word /tasallul/ which originally means to draw something. Those who escape stealthily and secretly are called /mutasallilun/.

The Arabic word /liwa□an/ is derived from the word /mulawa□ah/ which means concealment, and here it means to hide oneself behind someone else or behind a wall, and so to speak, they make others asleep and then escape. This was what hypocrites used to do when the Prophet (S) called people for holy war or an important job.

The holy Qur'an implies that if this hypocritical and hideous act of theirs is kept concealed from people, it will never remain concealed from Allah, and their oppositions against the command of the Prophet (S) call for a painful punishment both in this world and the Hereafter.

Commentators are of various opinions about the purpose of the Qur'anic word /fitnah/ (grief). Some Commentators say that it means murder, some say that it means aberration, some say that it means domination of an oppressing king, and some say that it means malady of hypocrisy that appears in the heart of men.

Another possibility is that it means social disorders, riots, defeat and other miseries that entangle society because of disobeying the leader's commandment. Anyway, the concept of /fitnah/ is so extensive that it includes all these affairs and many others, as 'a painful punishment' may include worldly punishment, or Hereafter chastisement, or both of them.

It is interesting that, besides what was said, there are mentioned two other possibilities in the commentary of the above verse. First, the purpose of the first sentence of the verse

(***"Make you not the calling of the Messenger among you as your calling one of another"***)

is that the Prophet (S) must be called politely as his status and rank deserves, not to call him as others are called, because some persons, who were not familiar with the Islamic politeness, came to the Prophet (S) and only called him among people, or alone, repeatedly in this way; Oh Muhammad!, Oh Muhammad!...

They behaved in a way that was not suitable for a great divine leader. The purpose was to call him in such ways (politely and reasonably): Oh Messenger of Allah! Oh Prophet of Allah!

In some narration this commentary is also mentioned, but, with regard to the previous verse and the rest of this verse, sentences that are about answering the call of the Prophet (S) and not leaving him without his permission, this commentary is not consistent with the appearance of the verse, unless we say that it indicates both matters and we add the first commentary to the concept of the verse.

The third commentary that has been mentioned for this verse, seems very weak. It indicates that they must not take the invocations and curses of the Prophet (S) like those of theirs5, for his invocations and curses are surely calculated and are a divine plan that will certainly work.

But, since this commentary is not in line with the rest of the verse and there is no narration about it from Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), therefore it cannot be accepted.

It is also necessary to mention that the scholars of theology understand from the Qur'anic sentence which says:

"...therefore let those who go against His order beware lest'..."

that the commands of the Prophet (S) contains an indication to obligation but this argument has got some problems that are referred to in theology.

Sura An-Nur - Verse 64

أَلاَ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ مَآ أَنتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَيَوْمَ يُرْجَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

64. "Beware! verily unto Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth. He does know what state you are upon; and (He knows) the Day when they shall be returned unto Him, then He will inform them of what they did; and Allah is Knower of all things."

Allah is surely the owner of all things and is aware of all intentions and thoughts; therefore, belief in Allah's awareness of man's deeds and thoughts prevents man from doing wrong actions.

In this noble verse a delicate and meaningful reference is made to the issue of Origin and Resurrection that is the motivation of obeying all divine orders. It, in fact guarantees the execution of all His orders and prohibitions, including those important ones that are mentioned throughout this Sura.

The verse says:

"Beware! verily unto Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth..."

He is the Lord Whose knowledge covers the entire world and, the verse continues saying:

"...He does know what state you are upon..."

All your deeds, your approach, your intention and opinion are known to Him.

All these matters are recorded on the page of knowledge.

The verse says:

“…and (He knows) the Day when they shall be returned unto Him, then He will inform them of what they did; and Allah is Knower of all things.”

It is worthy noting that emphasis is thrice put on Allah’s awareness of men’s deeds and this is for the sake that when man feels that someone is watching him ceaselessly, and nothing out of all his concealed and manifest things is hidden from him, this belief and opinion has got a very extraordinarily effect on him and it guarantees man to control him against these sins and deviations.

Supplication

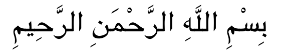
Oh Allah! May illuminate the lamp (Misbah) of our heart with the light of knowledge and faith and strengthen the niche (Mishkat) of our entity for protecting faith in us so that we may pave the straight path of Your prophets for the sake of Your consent and to be saved from any deviation under the aegis of Your favour as the extension of ‘La Sharqiyyah Wa La Qarbiyyah’ !

Oh Allah! May illuminate our eyes with the light of modesty, our heart with the light of cognition, our soul with the light of piety, and all our entity with the light of guidance and do save us from wandering around, ignorance, being entangled in the claws of Satan’s temptations!

Oh Allah! May fortify fundaments of government of Islamic justice for executing Your prescribed punishments and protect our society from being immodest and indecent; and verily You are All-Powerful over everything.

1. Al-Mizan, the Commentary
2. Fakhr-i-Razi
3. The commentary of Fakhr-i-Razi, Ruh-ul-Bayan, and Qurtabi, following the verse under discussion
4. Fakhr-i-Razi
5. If the letter ‘L’ is used after the word /du‘a’/, it means pray and if the word /‘ala/ is used after it, it means curse, and if there is none of them after it, it can mean both meanings.

Sura Al-Furqan, Chapter 25



In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

(The Distinction)
(Revealed in Mecca)
77 verses in 6 sections

The Feature of Sura Al-Furqan

This Sura contains seventy seven verses and it has been sent down in Mecca.

In the first verses of this Sura, the Qur'an has rendered it into 'Furqan' which means the separator of right from wrong; and that is why this Sura has been called 'Furqan'.

This Sura consists of some verses about the pretexts of the pagans and the answers given to them.

They are also about the lives of the former peoples, such as; the people of Rass, and the people's regret in the Hereafter, the signs of Unity, the greatness of Allah in nature, and the comparison of believers with unbelievers; but the most important part of the verses of this holy Sura is about the qualities of /'ibad-ur-rahman/ (the servants of Allah) who are the true servants of Allah, which begins from verse 63 up to the end of the Sura.

We hope, by reciting these verses and contemplating on them, which results the improvement of our behaviour and manner basing on these qualities, we can pave the way of receiving the Divine grace and favours in the world and Hereafter and entering Paradise.

The Virtue of Reciting Al-Furqan

There is a tradition quoted from 'Ishaq-ibn-'Ammar from Hadrat 'Abul-Hassan Musa-ibn-Ja'far who told him:

"Do not abandon reading Sura /tabaraka/ (Al-Furqan) since if any (believer) reads it every night, He will not punish him at all and He will not reckon him and his abode will be in the Exalted Firdaus (Paradise)."[1]

1. Thawab-ul-'A'mal, by Saduq, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 4, p. 2

Section 1: The Apostle Muhammad, A Warner to the Whole World

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَي عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيراً

1. "Blessed is He Who sent down the Furqan (The Distinction of right and wrong) upon His servant that he may be a Warner to the worlds;"

The Qur'anic word /tabaraka/ may be is derived from the word /baraka/ in the sense of 'stable' and 'fixed'. Or it is possible that it is derived from /barakat/ that means 'abundant goodness'.

It implies that He Who descended the Holy Qur'an is the source of many blessings and one of His blessings, as an example, is this very descending of the Qur'an. Yes, what blessing is more important than the divine law that has led milliards of people from darkness to the light of guidance in the course of history?

The Qur'anic word /nuzul/ means to send down at once and immediately, if it is in the form of the word /'anzalna/, and it means to send down gradually if it is in the form of the word /nazzala/.

But the holy Qur'an has enjoyed both kinds of descending; one time is in the Night of determination (Honour) in which Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet (S) at one instance, about which, it says:

"Surely, We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Honour."[1]

And the other time is done gradually during 23 years.

The Qur'an says:

"And (it is) Qur'an which We have divided (in sections) so that you may read it to the people at a slow pace and We have sent it down gradually in portion."[2]

And in another occurrence it says:

"...He Who sent down the Furqan (the Distinction of right and wrong) upon His servant..."[3]

Anyway, the Qur'an has come from a blessed source, thus, through the first verse, it says:

"Blessed is He Who sent down the Furqan (The Distinction of right and wrong) upon His servant that he may be a Warner to the worlds;"

It is interesting that the blessedness of Allah's Essence is introduced by descending of Furqan, that is Qur'an, the separator of truth and falsehood. This shows that the best favour and blessing is that man has got a means for cognition, knowing the difference between truth and falsehood.

Another interesting thing is that the Qur'anic word Furqan has sometimes been used in the sense of Qur'an and sometimes it means the miracles that distinguish truth from falsehood. Sometimes it is applied to Torah, but here, with regard to the context of this verse and the other verses, it means the Qur'an.

In some narrations we read that when Imam Sadiq (as) was asked about the difference between the Qur'an and Furqan, he said:

"The Qur'an refers to these celestial Books wholly, and Furqan refers to the clear verses."[4]

This noble narration is not in contrast with Furqan being distinguisher of all verses of the Qur'an and its purpose is that clear verses have got a clearer and more obvious extension of Furqan and distinguishing of truth from falsehood.

The blessing of 'distinguishing and knowing' is so important that the Glorious Qur'an has been introduced as the great reward of those who are pious, where it says:

"O you who have Faith! If you be in awe of Allah, He will assign for you a discrimination (between right and wrong) ..."[5]

Yes, distinguishing truth from falsehood is possible only through piety, for sins, love and hatred cover truth with a thick veil and they blind man's perception and insight.

Anyway, the Glorious Qur'an is the best Furqan. It is a means for distinguishing truth from falsehood in all life system of man. It is a means for knowing truth and falsehood during personal and social life and it is a criterion for thoughts, beliefs, laws, judgments, customs, rules and ethics.

This matter is also important that the verse says:

"...Who sent down the Furqan (The Distinction of right and wrong) upon His servant..."

Yes, it is the sincere servitude and submission that makes a man deserving and worthy for receiving Furqan and accepting the criteria of knowing truth and falsehood.

Finally, the last matter mentioned in this verse is that the ultimate aim of Furqan is to warn people of the world, a warning that leads man to feel responsibility for duties and obligations that are put on his shoulder.

The Qur'anic phrase /lil 'alamin/, meaning: '(the peoples) of the worlds', shows that Islam religion is universal and is not limited to a certain region, race and tribe.

But some have used it for the Prophet (S) as being the seal of the prophets, for the word /'alamin/ not only is not limited to place, but also it is not chronologically limited to a special time and it includes all the future generations, too.

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 2

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَداً وَلَمْ يَكُن لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَّرَهُ تَقْدِيراً

2. "He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and He has not taken any son (unto Himself), nor has He any partner in His dominion, and He created everything, then ordered them in due proportions."

Polytheists, Jews, and Christians each believed in a way that Allah has got a partner or child, and the holy Qur'an has rejected these false beliefs many times, including this verse that describes Allah, Who has descended Furqan, with four attributes one of which is, in fact, the base and the rest are its results and branches.

First it says:

"He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth..."[6]

Yes, He is the ruler of all universe, the skies and the earth, and nothing is out of His sovereignty.

With regard to the matter that the Qur'anic word /lahu/ has come before the phrase /mulk-us-samawat/, and according to Arabic literature it is a reason for limitation and exclusivity, it is understood that the real domination and authority of the skies and the earth belongs to Him (s.w.t), for His rulership is general, perpetual and real, contrary to other rulerships that are unstable, insignificant, and, in the meantime, dependent on Him.

Then polytheists' beliefs are one by one rejected:

"...and He has not taken any son (unto Himself)..."

Basically needing child, as we said before, is whether for using his or her physical power, or for having him or her at the time of loneliness. Certainly none of the above needs are part of His Pure Essence.

In this way, the Christians' belief that Jesus Christ (as) is the Son of God and the belief of the Jews that Ezra is the Son of God both are rejected. Moreover, Arab polytheist's belief in this regard is rejected.

Then the verse continues saying:

"...nor has He any partner in His dominion..."

Arab polytheists believed in partner or partners which they considered as partner of Allah. When they wanted to worship, they turned to them for the sake of intercession and they asked their help for fulfilling their needs so that they explicitly uttered ugly and polytheistic words and sentences when they wanted to

say ‘Labbayk’ (at your service) at the time the rites of Hajj, saying:

“I accepted Your call, oh Lord, Who has no partner except the partner that belongs to You and You are the Owner of this partner and You are the Owner of what he owns.”

The holy Qur’an rejects all these vain imaginations. In the last sentence, it implies that not only Allah has created all things but also He has precisely defined their proportions and administrations.

The verse says:

“…and He created everything, then ordered them in due proportions.”

The dualists’ belief, which implies that part of the world creatures is created by Lord and the other part is created by Devil, is also rejected.

According to dualists, creation is divided between Lord and Devil, because they believe that the world is a collection of the bad and the good, while a real monotheist believes that except goodness there is nothing in the world, and if there is any bad it is relative or negative or it is the result of our deeds.

Some Points

1. Exact measurement of creatures: Not only the calculated stable system of the world is among the strong reasons of monotheism and knowing Allah (s.w.t.), but also its exact measurement is another clear reason.

We cannot consider measurement of various creatures of this world and its calculated quality and quantity as effect of accident. It is not in line with probability theory.

Scientists have studied about it, and uncovered some mysteries which cause the astonishment of man so much that he unintentionally begins to praise Allah’s magnificence and might. Here we refer to some of them:

Scientists say that if the outer cover of the earth were 10 feet thicker, there would be no oxygen, a vital material of life.

Or if the depth of seas were several feet more than what is today, all oxygen and carbon of the earth would be absorbed and it would be impossible to have a vegetable or animal life on the earth, and when most probably the crust of the earth and the water of the seas would absorb the whole existing oxygen, and for his growth and man would have to wait for the growth of plants so that through them he could use needed oxygen.

According to studious researches, it gets clear that it may be possible to gain needed oxygen for human from various sources, but the important matter is that this amount of oxygen is as much as the amount

that has scattered in the air for man's use.

If the earth atmosphere were a little thinner than what is today, heavenly bodies and shooting stars, that cannot reach the earth, would hit the earth million times a day.

These heavenly bodies move 6 to 40 miles per second and if they hit any place, that place will be burnt and destroyed. If their speed were less than what it is, and for example equal to the speed of a bullet, all of them would come to the earth and it is clear that they would destroy everything.

If man himself were placed on the way of one of the smallest heavenly bodies, the intensity of the heat of them, that move 90 times faster than a bullet, would rend and destroy him.

The density of the earth atmosphere is to the extent that it allows cosmic rays pass as much as the growth of plants needs. And all harmful microbes are destroyed in the atmosphere and beneficial vitamins are created by them.

While there are various vapors that have come out of the depth of the earth during many centuries, nevertheless, the air of the earth does not get polluted and it is always well balanced for the continuity of man's life.

The great machine that creates and keeps such strange balance is the very seas and oceans from which vital and nutritional materials, rain, moderation of air and plants and finally man himself originate. Every person who is able to understand must bow down before the sea and thank it for its favours.

2. Strange proportion and very exact balance that is between oxygen and carbonic acid gas, that is for creating animal and vegetable life, has attracted the attention of all thinkers and scientists and make them think about it.

The importance of carbonic acid gas is still uncovered to many people. It must also be mentioned that carbonic acid gas is the gas that is used for making fizzy drinks.

Carbonic acid gas is a heavy and dense gas that is fortunately near the surface of the earth. It separates from oxygen uneasily and with problem.

When a piece of wood is set on fire, wood, which includes oxygen, hydrogen and carbon, is analysed chemically and carbon will be mixed with oxygen very quickly and carbon acid gas is so created. Its hydrogen is quickly mixed with oxygen and water vapour will be created. Smoke is pure carbon which is not mixed up.

When man breathes, he inhales some oxygen. Blood takes it to all places of body. Oxygen burns food in various cells slowly and with a weak heat. Its vapour and carbonic acid gas goes out. Carbonic acid gas that is created by burning of food in cells returns to lung and with later breathings it goes out of the body. Thus all living creatures inhale oxygen and exhale carbonic acid gas.

3. How wonderful the way of controlling and balancing in this world is. Because of this natural balance, animals cannot dominate the world, no matter how much they are huge or brutal. Only man can change this natural balance and transfer animals and plants from one place to other places. By the way, he pays the fine of his impudence, because blights and pests cause him irretrievable harms.

The following story is a good example that shows how man must observe this balance for the sake of his life:

Some years ago in Australia a famous plant named Cactus was planted near farms fences and because no pest could harm it at that time it started to grow a lot strangely. Very soon it covered an area that was as big as England and people had to escape from villages and hamlets. It destroyed all their farms and made farming impossible.

The local inhabitants used whatever they had, but nothing they could do. Australia confronted the danger and threat of stubborn Cactus army.

Scientists and researchers started to find a solution for this dangerous problem. At last, they found out that there is an insect that only feeds on stem, leaf and root of Cactus and except this food it eats nothing. And it multiplies easily and no enemy it has in Australia.

In this case animal defeated plant and there is no danger of Cactus today. And when Cactus was destroyed, that insect also disappeared. Only some of them remained so that they control the growth of Cactus. Creation has set this balance in the nature and it is very beneficial, too.

What has happened that malaria mosquito has not spread all over the world and has not destroyed man generation, while common mosquitoes can also be found even in polar areas?

Or what happened when the mosquito of yellow fever came near New York but did not kill all people of the world? Or what has happened that tsetse fly is created in a way that can live only in equatorial areas and has not vanished the human generation throughout the world? (All of these have been prevented by a very calculated system.)

It is only enough to remember the fact that with what pests and maladies we have fought during many centuries. How wonderfully we were formerly protected against these maladies while we did not know any health matters![7]

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 3

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً لاَ يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئاً وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلاَ يَمْلِكُونَ لاَنفُسِهِمْ ضَرّاً وَلاَ نَفْعاً وَلاَ يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتاً وَلاَحَيَاةً وَلاَ نُشُوراً

3. "Yet they have taken gods, besides Him, gods that do not create anything while they are themselves created and they do not own for themselves any hurt or profit, nor can they control death nor life nor resurrection."

The reason of man's servitude is Allah's power in solving problems and knotty affairs, while idols cannot do such thing.

(***'They do not own'***)

This holy verse continues the previous discussion about struggling with polytheism, idol worshipping, and baseless claims of idol worshippers about their idols and then-accusations of the holy Qur'an and the Prophet (S) mentioned in former verses.

First, polytheists are in fact called to trial and, to pick then-conscience with a clear, simple, decisive logic, it says:

"Yet they have taken gods, besides Him, gods that do not create anything while they are themselves created..."

The real deity is the Creator of the universe, but they did not have such a claim about idols and they knew them as creatures of Allah.

But what was their motivation for worshipping idols? Idols that possess not hurt nor profit for themselves, and possess not death nor life, nor power to raise the dead (let alone others).

The verse in this regard says:

"...and they do not own for themselves any hurt or profit, nor can they control death nor life nor resurrection."

The principles that are important for man are as follows: profit, loss, death, life, and resurrection.

Does one who is the owner of these affairs deserve worshipping? But idols cannot do such things for themselves, let alone they want to protect and support their worshippers?

What a shameful logic is that man follows a creature and worships it, while it cannot even control itself let alone others. Neither does this idol solve a problem in this world nor can it do anything in the other world.

This sentence shows that this group of polytheists, who have been addressed in this verse, had accepted resurrection in a way (although not physical one but spiritual resurrection). Or the Qur'an was certain about their lack of belief in the resurrection and talked to them in a certain and decisive way.

This is usual that sometimes man faces one person who denies truth, but he expresses his own ideas

and beliefs resolutely without paying attention to that person's thoughts. Especially when there is an implied reason for resurrection in the verse, because when a creator creates a creature and is the owner of creature's loss and benefit, he must have an aim for his creation.

And this aim concerning man is impossible without accepting the issue of resurrection, for if everything ended with the death of man, life would be nonsense and it would be a reason indicating that that creator was not wise.

Meanwhile if we see that the issue of loss has come before the issue of benefit, it is because man first fears loss and the sentence 'protection from loss is prior to the achievement of benefit' has turned into an intellectual rule.

And if 'loss', 'benefit', 'death', 'life', 'resurrection' have been mentioned indeterminately, it is for the fact that these idols are not controlling benefit, loss, death, life, and resurrection even in one case, let alone all people.

And if the Qur'anic phrase /layamlikuna/ (they possess not) and /layaxluquna/ (they create naught) are mentioned in the masculine, plural, wise form (while stone and wooden idols have got no wisdom and sense), it is for the matter that these phrases are not only about wooden and stone idols, but also there was a group that worshipped Christ or angels and because sage and non-sage are all included in the meaning of the verse, all of them are mentioned as wise.

Or according to the opinion of the opposite party, it is said for showing their weakness and inability. It implies that they believed that these idols had intellect and sense, but these idols cannot protect themselves from loss and can not achieve any benefit!

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 4

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلاَّ إِفْكٌ افْتَرَاهُ وَأَعَانَهُ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ ءَاخَرُونَ فَقَدْ جآءُوا ظُلْماً وَزُوراً

4. "And those who disbelieve say: 'This (***Qur'an***) ***is nothing but a lie which he*** (***our Apostle***) ***has forged, and other people have helped him at it; so indeed they have done injustice and*** (***uttered***) ***a falsehood."***

The Arabic word /ifk/ means lie, and the word /zur/ means a false word[8]. In all of the Holy Qur'an only here the words /zulm/ (iniquity) and /zur/ have come together, because pagans prevented others from being guided by means of false accusation of the Prophet (S) and belying the heavenly Book.

So this noble verse is about pagans' analysis or, in better words, their pretext-seeking against the call of the Prophet (S) when it says:

“And those who disbelieve say: ‘This (Qur’an) is nothing but a lie which he (our Apostle) has forged, and other people have helped him at it…”

In fact, in order not to shoulder the Truth – as those who in the course of history decided to be against divine leaders – they first accused him to calumny and falsehood, and especially, in order to scorn the Holy Qur’an, they used the word /ha�a/ (this).

Then, in order to prove that he could not say such words by himself, because saying such meaningful words needs at least a lot of knowledge and they did not want to accept it, and in order to say that this was a calculated program, they said that he was not alone and others have helped him at it and that there was a conspiracy and they must stand against him.

Some of commentators have said that the purpose of/qaum un ’axarun/ (other people) is a group of Jews. And some others have said that the objective is three persons of the People of The Book, that is ‘Adas’, ‘Yasar’, and ‘Hibr’ (or ‘Jibr’).

Anyway, since such matters did not exist among the polytheists of Mecca and some part of it, such as: the story of the former prophets, was among Jews and the People of The Book, they had to drag the People of the Book into this accusation so that the people became less astonished and bewildered by hearing these verses.

But, in their answer here, the Holy Qur’an says only one sentence:

“…so indeed they have done injustice and (uttered) a falsehood.”[9]

It is /zulm/ (a wrong action) because they, as well as some of the People of the Book, accused a trustworthy, veracious and pure man such as the Prophet (S) of giving a false impression of Allah and they did wrong action towards themselves and people.

It is false and invalid, because their words were completely baseless and the Prophet (S) had repeatedly called them to present some verses and Suras like those of the Holy Qur’an and, confronting this challenge of the Qur’an, they were somehow unable to achieve it.

This shows that these verses are not the product of man’s mind, because if it were so, they could also present such verses with the help of the Jews and the People of the Book. Therefore, their inability to do it is the reason of their lie and their lie is the reason of their iniquity. So the short sentence saying:

“…so indeed they have done injustice and (uttered) a falsehood.”

is a clear and expressive answer to their groundless claims.

The Arabic word /zur/ is in fact derived from a word that means the upper part of the chest. Then it was applied to whatever that inclines from the middle and, because lie deviates from truth and inclines

toward falsehood, it is called /zur/.

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 5-6

وَقَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الأَوَّلِينَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلَى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلاً

قُلْ أَنزَلَهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفُوراً رَّحِيماً

5. "And they say: '(Qur'an is) the stories of the ancients he has got them written, so they are dictated before him morning and evening'."
6. "Say: 'He sent it down Who knows the secrets in the heavens and the earth. Verily He is ever Forgiving, Merciful'."

Pagans both found fault with the content of the Holy Qur'an, that these are old fables, and expressed doubt about the holy Prophet (S), that he had made copy and they considered some unreal companions for him:

(*"...they are dictated to him..."*).

The purpose of 'old fables' is whether they believed that some persons wrote for him, or they said the Prophet (S) was literate and negated his being uneducated.

In these holy verses, one of their derivative analyses and meaningless pretexts about the holy Qur'an is talked about.

It says:

"And they say: '(Qur'an is) the stories of the ancients he has got them written..."

This means that he, in fact, has nothing by himself. He has no knowledge and innovation, let alone revelation and prophethood. Some persons have helped him to gather some old legends and named it heavenly book.

In order to achieve this aim, he is helped by others every day. The verse continues saying:

"...so they are dictated before him morning and evening'."

He is helped in the morning and evening when there are few people out.

This is, in fact, explanation of the false accusations that were mentioned in the previous verse.

By these short sentences, they intend to impose some weak points on the holy Qur'an: First, the holy

Qur’an has got no new matter or subject and it is some old legends. Second, the Prophet (S) can not continue his job without others’ help and every morning and evening matters must be read out to him and he writes them. Third, he can write and read and if he says that he is not educated, he is lying.

As a matter of fact, they intended to break up people who were with the Prophet (S), but all wise persons who had lived for a time in that society knew well that the Prophet (S) had not been educated by anybody and had nothing to do with the Jews and the People of the Book.

If he were inspired by others every day and night, how would it be possible to remain hidden from others? Moreover the verses of Qur’an were revealed to him in journey, among people, in solitude and in all conditions.

Additionally, the holy Qur’an was a collection of doctrinal teachings, religious ordinances, laws and some part of the story of the prophets. When all of the holy Qur’an was sent down, it was not like what was in Old and New Testaments as well as Arab superstitious legends.

If we compare both of them, we see what the truth is, because those scriptures were full of superstitions while these verses were free from any superstition.

Therefore, answering these groundless accusations, the last concerned verse says:

“Say: ‘He sent it down Who knows the secrets in the heavens and the earth…”

It refers to this matter that the content of this Book and its various mysteries that are about sciences, the history of former nations, laws, man’s needs, even some secrets of nature and news about the future, all indicate that it is not the product of man’s mind and it is not compiled by the help of such and such persons.

It is in fact generated by One Who knows mysteries of heavens and the earth and nothing is out of His knowledge realm.

Nevertheless, the path of return is open to those who are liar and evil thinkers, and, in the end of the verse, it says:

“…Verily He is ever Forgiving, Merciful’.”

In agreement with His Mercy, He has sent prophets and heavenly Books, and in agreement with His forgiveness, He pardons our countless sins in the light of faith and penance.

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 7-8

وَقَالُوا مَالِ هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الاَسْوَاقِ لَوْلاَ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونَ مَعَهُ نَذِيراً

أَوْ يُلْقَي إِلَيْهِ كَنزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلاَّ رَجُلاً مَّسْحُوراً

7. "And they say: 'What sort of a Messenger is this that he eats food and he walks about in the markets? Why has not an angel been sent down to him, to be a warner with him?"
8. "Or why has not a treasure been bestowed on him, or why has he not a garden to eat of it?' And the unjust say: 'You follow none other than a man bewitched'."

Occasion of Revelation

Imam Hassan 'Askari (as) said that he asked his father, the tenth Imam, whether the Prophet (S) argued against seeking pretext and reproaches of the Jews and pagans. His father said:

"Yes, it happened many times, including the day when the Prophet (S) was sitting beside Allah's house and 'Abdullah Ibn Abi-Omayah Makhzumi came to him and, standing in front of him, said:

'Oh! Muhammad, you have made a great claim and are stating terrible words! You think that you are the messenger of the Lord of the peoples, but it is not appropriate for the Creator of all creatures and people to have a messenger like you, a human like us. You eat like us and walk in markets as we do!'

The Prophet (S) said:

'Oh Allah! You hear all words and speeches and know all things. You know what Your servants say. (You Yourself answer them.)'

At this time the above verses were revealed and their seeking pretext were answered."[10]

Since the former holy verses mentioned pagans' objections about the Glorious Qur'an and they were answered in them, the concerned verses bring about another part that is about the mission of the Prophet (S) and it is also answered.

The verse says:

"And they say: 'What sort of a Messenger is this that he eats food and he walks about in the markets?..."

They wanted to say that what a prophet he is. He needs food as other people need. He walks in markets for business and buying what he needs. This is neither the tradition of the messengers nor the custom of the kings, while he wants both to declare Divine invitation and to rule us!

They fundamentally believed that the outstanding persons must not go by themselves to market for buying what they need, but they must send servants and agents for this matter.

Then they said:

“...Why has not an angel been sent down to him, to be a warner with him?”

Very well! Suppose that a man can be a messenger of Allah, but why is he poor and destitute?

The verse says:

“Or why has not a treasure been bestowed on him, or why has he not a garden to eat of it?’...”

They did not get satisfied only with these and finally they accused him of insanity.

In the end of the verse we read:

“...And the unjust say: ’You follow none other than a man bewitched’.”

They believed that sorcerers can influence the intellect and intelligence of individuals and own the faculty of reasoning!

It is understood from the above holy verses that they found some illusive faults with the Prophet (S) and in every phase they retreated from their views.

They first believed that the messenger must be an angel. That he eats food and walks in markets shows that he is not an angel.

Then they said that if he is not an angel, an angel must be sent by Allah for helping him.

Again they took retrograde step and said that supposing Allah’s prophet is a man, a treasure must be sent down to him from the heaven, so that it will be a reason for the matter that he is supported by Allah!

In the last phase they said supposing he has none of these, but he must be at least not a poor man. Like a wealthy farmer he must have a garden for marinating him. But he has none of these and still he is saying that he is a prophet.

As a conclusion, they said that his great claim in such conditions is the sign of insanity!!

1. Sura Al-Qadr, No. 97, verse 1
2. Sura Al-’Issra’, No. 17, verse 106
3. The verse under discussion
4. Burhan, Vol. 3, p. 155
5. Sura Al-’Anfal, No. 8, verse 29
6. According to Raqib in Mufradat, the word /mulk/ means: ‘To take something in one’s authority and having dominion on it.’
7. Extracted from the book ‘The Mystery of Man Creation’, pages 33-449
8. Lisan-ul-’Arab
9. Thr word /ja’u/ means to come, but here it means to bring.
10. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 4, p. 6

Section 2: The Bounties Awaiting the Apostle

Sura Al-Furqan – Verses 9-10

انظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلاً

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي إِن شَآءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْراً مِّن ذَلِكَ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ وَيَجْعَل لَّكَ قُصُوراً

9. "Behold, how they strike similitudes for you, but they have gone astray, so they shall not be able to find a way** (**to the truth**)**."
10. "Blessed is He Who, if that were His will, could give you better** (**things**) **than all that, gardens beneath which rivers flow, and He will give you palaces."

One will get misled, if logic, miracle, and accomplishments of the Prophet (S) are not paid attention to and wealth, posts, and seeking pretext get to be the aim.

(***'...but they have gone astray, ...'***)

Therefore in a short sentence, the Qur'an in this noble verse says:

"Behold, how they strike similitudes for you, but they have gone astray, so they shall not be able to find a way** (**to the truth**)**."

This sentence clearly illustrates this fact that against the call of Allah and the Qur'an, whose content is an expressive proof of its relationship with Allali, they fell back on some illusive words and they wanted to cover the face of the truth by these groundless words.

This is just like a person who resorts to some seeking pretext, being clearly baseless, in order to stand against our logical arguments and we do not answer what he has said separately, but we simply say you may see with what illusive words does he want to stand against the logical reason?

And verily all of their words in all of their parts were so, because:

First: Why must a prophet be one of angels? But intellect and knowledge say that a human must lead human beings, so that he knows and perceives all their pains, needs, problems, and life issues, so, he will be a paragon in all aspects and people can be inspired in all programs.

If an angel were sent down, certainly this aim would not be fulfilled and people would say:

“If he speaks about piety and paying no attention to the world, it is because he is an angel and needs nothing. If he speaks about modesty and calls to chastity, it is because he knows nothing of sexual desire.”

And there are also many other matters.

Second: Is it necessary to send an angel to be the company of man for the sake of confirming him? Are not miracles, specially a great miracle such as the holy Qur’an, enough for understanding this reality?

Third: Eating food like other men and going to markets cause him to associate with people more and to know their life more deeply.It helps him to carry out his mission better. There is not only loss or harm in this, but it is a kind of help for him.

Forth: Eminence and personality of the Prophet (S) does not depend on treasure, wealth, and huge gardens full of fruits. This is the pagan’s deviating conception of personality and even nearness to Allah as being depended on wealth and money, while prophets have come to say that the value of man depends on his knowledge, faith and piety.

Fifth: According to what criterion did they call him insane and bewitched? According to history, his great revolution and his foundation of Islamic civilization were extraordinary, how can he be accused and given such ridiculous labels? Unless we say that breaking idols and not blindly following the ancestors is a reason of insanity!

According to what was said, it gets clear that the word /’amal/ (similitudes), here, especially with regard of the context, means groundless and meaningless words. Using this word is perhaps because of the matter that they uttered their words in the form of truth, similitude and like a logical reason, while it was not really so.

Another matter that we must pay attention to is that the foes of the Prophet (S) used to accuse him of being sorcerer and sometimes being bewitched, though some of the commentators say that ‘being bewitched’ perhaps means ‘being sorcerer’ (because in Arabic sometime past participle is used as subject), but apparently these two words are different.

If they called him sorcerer, it was because his words extraordinarily influenced hearts and they did not want to accept this fact and, therefore, they resorted to the accusation of being sorcerer.

Being bewitched means to be mentally and intellectually influenced by sorcerers and to have distorted senses. This accusation originated from this fact that he broke the tradition and swam against the stream ideologically and was against personal interests, superstitious habits and customs. But all these accusations are answered by the above words.

A question now arises that why it is said:

“…but they have gone astray, so they shall not be able to find a way (to the truth).”

Its answer is that man can find the path of the truth if he wills and wants the truth. But the one, who has already made decision by wrong and deviating prejudgments that originate from ignorance and stubbornness, not only does not find the truth but also stands against it.

The next verse, similar to the previous one, addresses the Prophet (S) and says, with the intention of scorning their words and saying that they are unanswerable.

It says:

“Blessed is He Who, if that were His will, could give you better (things) than all that, gardens beneath which rivers flow, and He will give you palaces.”

Except Allah, who is it that has given gardens and palaces to them? Basically, except Allah, who is it that has created all of these beauties and blessings? Cannot such a powerful and mighty Allah provide better than these for you?

But He does not want people to think that the personality of the Prophet (S) depends on wealth, money, garden, and palace. He wants the life of the Prophet (S) to be like the life of common people, the oppressed and the poor, so that he will be a sanctuary for all of them.

But, why it is said that gardens and palaces are better than what they wanted, for treasure by itself does not resolve all the problems and difficulties, but it must be changed to gardens and palaces by a lot of troubles.

Moreover, they said that the Prophet (S) must have a garden to sustain him, but the holy Qur’an says:

“…He Who, if that were His will, could give you better (things) than all that, gardens beneath which rivers flow, and He will give you palaces.”,

(but the aim of the Prophet’s mission is something else).

In a sermon called Qasi‘ah, No. 192, by Imam Ali (as), we find this matter expressed very explicitly:

“When Musa, the son of ’Imran, went to Pharaoh along with his brother Harun (Aaron) wearing (coarse) shirts of wool and holding sticks in their hands, they guaranteed him retention of his country and continuity of his honour if he submitted; but he said:

‘Do you not wonder at these two men who guaranteed me the continuity of my honour and the retention of my country although you see their poverty and lowliness. Otherwise, why do they not have gold bangels on their wrists?’

He said so feeling proud of his gold and collected possessions, and belittled wool and wearing woolen

garment.

When Allah, the Glorified, deputed His prophets, if He had wished to open for them the doors of treasures and mines of gold and (surround them with) planted gardens and to collect around them birds of the skies and beasts of the earth, He would have done so.

If he had done so then there would have been no trial, nor recompense and no tidings (about the affairs of the next world). Those who accepted (His message) could not be given the recompense falling due after trial and the believers could not deserve the reward for good acts, and all these words would not have retained their meanings.

But Allah, the Glorified, makes His Prophets firm in their determinations and gives them weakness of appearance as seen from the eyes, along with contentment that fills the hearts and eyes resulting from care-freeness, and with the want that pains the ordinary eyes and ears.

If the prophets had possessed such authority that could not be assaulted, or honour that could not be damaged or domain towards which the necks of people would turn and the saddles of mounts could be set, it would have been very easy for people to seek lessons and quite difficult to feel vanity.

They would have then accepted belief out of fear felt by them or inclination attracting them, and the intention of them all would have been the same, although their actions would have been different.

Therefore, Allah, the Glorified decided that people should follow His prophets, acknowledge His books, remain humble before His face, obey His command and accept His obedience with sincerity in which there should not be an iota of anything else; and as the trial and tribulation would be stiffer the reward and recompense too should be larger.[1]

Some say that the purpose of palace and garden is that of the other world, but this commentary is not in line with the appearance of the verse.

However, the Arabic word/tabaraka/ is derived either from /baraka/ with the sense of 'fix' and 'ever lasting', or from /barakat/ which means 'abundant goodness'.

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 11

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالسَّاعَةِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِمَن كَذَّبَ بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيراً

11. "But they deny the Hour (of Resurrection), and We have prepared a Blazing Fire for him who denies the Hour."

The Arabic word /sa'ir/ (blaze) means a burning and ablaze fire. The source of pagans' pretexts is often

disbelief in the Hereafter.

To continue the Qur'anic discussion of pagans' deviation from monotheism and prophethood which was in the previous verses, this noble verse talks about another part of their deviations from the view of the issue of the resurrection.

In fact, with the statement of this part, it gets clear that they were utterly shaky and deviated in all principles of religion, both monotheism, and prophethood, and resurrection. Two of them have been mentioned in the former verses and now we turn to the third one.

The verse says:

"But they deny the Hour** (**of Resurrection**)**..."

By mentioning the Arabic word /bal/, the verse implies that what they say about monotheism and prophethood is just some pretexts that originate from denial of resurrection, because if one believes in such a great court and the divine reward and punishment, one neither boldly ridicules the truths nor rejects a prophet's call for illusive reasons, nor bows down before idols that he has made by himself.

But, here, the holy Qur'an has not given them any argumentative answers, for they were not men of reason and argument, but the Qur'an warns and threatens them severely and harshly and illustrates their gloomy and painful future for them. Sometimes this logic is more effective for such people.

It continues saying:

"...and We have prepared a Blazing Fire for him who denies the Hour."

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 12-13

إِذَا رَأَتْهُم مِن مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا لَهَا تَغَيُّظاً وَزَفِيراً

وَإِذَآ أُلْقُوا مِنْهَا مَكَاناً ضَيِّقاً مُقَرَّنِينَ دَعَوْا هُنَالِكَ ثُبُوراً

12. "When it sees them from a far place, they will hear its raging and roaring."
13. "And when they are cast, coupled in fetters, into a narrow place of that Fire, they will call out there for destruction.'"

The Qur'anic word /taqayyuz/ means declaring one's anger and intensity of wrath which is sometimes along with sound and voice. The Arabic word /zafir/ means the sound of breathing when the chest is constricted because of abundance of sorrow. The Qur'anic word /muqarranin/ means to fasten with fetter and chain. The word /ubur/ means to express woe and regret.

In this verse, a strange description is provided for this blazing fire. It says:

"When it sees them from a far place, they will hear its raging and roaring."

In this statement there are several clear meanings which show how severe the divine punishment is:

1. The verse does not say that they see the Fire from afar, but it says that Fire sees them, as if it has eye and ear and looks forward them and expects these wrongdoers!

2. It does not need that they come near it in order to be fermented, but it cries out of anger from a long distance. Some narrations say that the distance is as long as one year of walking.

3. The word /taqayyuz/ is used to describe this Fire, which is a status in which man expresses his fury by means of cry and clamour.

4. The word /zafir/ is used to describe the Fire. It is like the situation in which man inhales and the ribs come up, and this is usually when man is very angry.

All of the above explanations show that the blazing Fire is like a brutal beast that awaits its prey. This waiting drags this group, (we take refuge in Allah!)

That is the condition of Fire when it sees them from a long distance, but the next verse describes their condition when they are in the Hell Fire, by saying:

"And when they are cast, coupled in fetters, into a narrow place of that Fire, they will call out there for destruction."

This is not because the Hell is small, since, according to the 30th verse of Sura Qaf, No. 50, the Qur'an says:

"On the Day** (**when**) **We say unto Hell: 'Are you filled up?' And it says: 'Are there any more?"

Thus, Hell is a very vast place but they are so confined in it that, in some narration we read that their entrance into the Hell is like entering a nail into a wall.[2]

Meanwhile, the Qur'anic word /ubur/ originally means 'decay and destruction'. When a man fears from something terrible or horrific, he cries: /wa abura/ which means: 'woe to me.'

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 14

لاَ تَدْعُوا الْيَوْمَ ثُبُوراً وَاحِداً وَادْعُوا ثُبُوراً كَثِيراً

14. "** (**It will be said to them:**) **'Call not this day for one destruction, but call for many

destructions!"

This verse implies that they must not say /wa abura/ for one time, but they must say it many times. The verse says:

" (It will be said to them:) 'Call not this day for one destruction, but call for many destructions!"

Anyway, their cry and moaning does not have any result and there will be no death or destruction, but they must remain alive and experience painful chastisements.

This verse is in fact like the 16th verse of Sura At-Tur, No. 52, which says:

"Endure the heat thereof, and whether you are patient of it or impatient of it is all one for you. You are only being paid for what you used to do."

That who tells such words to pagans, the context shows that angels of chastisement do this, because they deal with pagans.

But why they are told that they must not say /wa ubura/ for one time, but they must say it many times, perhaps it is because their painful chastisement is not temporal that it ends with saying this phrase one time, but they must always repeat it during this period.

Moreover the divine punishment that is for these criminals is so miscellaneous that they face their death by experiencing each of these punishments and they cry /wa ubura/ each time. It seems that they die and become alive successively.

The Prophet (S) in a tradition says:

*"The people of the Hell are under pressure like nail in wall."*3

Its reason is that: ignoring Allah leads to desperate straits in this world and the other world. Concerning what they have in this world:

"...He makes his breast narrow and straitened..."4,

and:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance, verily for him is a life straitened..."5,

and in the other world:

"And when they are cast, coupled in fetters, into a narrow place of that Fire...".6

On the contrary, paying attention to Allah and having faith in Him, is the cause of calmness and peacefulness both in this world:

"We would have certainly opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth..."[7]

and the other world:

"...when they reach it, the gates thereof are opened...".[8]

In another occurrence, the Qur'an says:

"Is one who follows the pleasure of Allah like him who incurs wrath from Allah, and whose abode will be Hell? And an evil destination it is! "[9]

There has been narrated from Imam Sadiq, the sixth Imam (as), who said:

"The Hell has got 7 gates. From one of them our enemies and those who fight and belittle us enter. Certainly this gate is the greatest and the most blazing one."[10]

The Prophet (S) says:

"The fire of this world is one part of the seventy parts of the Hell Fire. Each of those parts has got its own heat."[11]

Imam Ali (as) once says:

"One who enters the Hell is miserable for ever."[12]

The Prophet (S) says:

"The least punishment of the people of the Hell is wearing a blazing pair of shoes on the Day of Hereafter that are so hot that their brain begins to boil from them."[13]

Imam Ali (as) says:

"Fear the Fire the heat of which is too much, and its bottom is very deep and its ornament is iron, and its beverage is boiling fetid water (blood mixed with filth)."[14]

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 15-16

قُلْ أَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَزَآءً وَمَصِيراً

لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَآءُونَ خَالِدِينَ كَانَ عَلَي رَبِّكَ وَعْداً مَسْؤُولاً

15. "Say: 'Is that better or the eternal garden which has been promised to the pious ones? That

shall be a reward and a resort for them'."

16. "For them there will be therein whatever they desire: they will dwell (there) for aye. It is for your Lord a promise that must be fulfilled."

The promise of Paradise is to be fulfilled certainly. The demands of the people of the Paradise are logical and wise as the demands of Allah are so.

It means that as:

"...Allah does what He will"[15]***,***

and He does it wisely, the believers have also got wise demands:

"For them there will be therein whatever they desire...".

It will not be in a way that they want the people of the Hell to be freed or they want to have the rank of prophets, because such demands are not wise. Therefore, in this verse, the Prophet is addressed to call people to judge.

It says:

"Say: 'Is that better or the eternal garden which has been promised to the pious ones? That shall be a reward and a resort for them'."

This is the promised Paradise where they will abide for ever, (khalidin).

And the next verse says:

"For them there will be therein whatever they desire: they will dwell (there) for aye. It is for your Lord a promise that must be fulfilled."

This question and asking for judgment is for the sake that about which no one has doubt. It is not for the matter that those painful and terrible punishments can be compared with those matchless blessings and favours, but these kinds of questions are for striking sleeping consciences and wakening people, so that they may be faced with a dilemma.

If they say that these blessings are better and superior (and certainly they must say so), they have condemned themselves since their wouldly deeds are against it. If they say that those punishments are better than these blessings, they have proved that they are insane.

This is like giving warning to a truant young man who has left school or university saying that those who escape from intellect and knowledge will go finally to jail, and asking them:

"Which is better, going to jail or gaining the high ranks?"

Some Points

1. In the above verses, one time it is said that Paradise is perpetual (khuld) as a quality for it, and one time it is said that the people of the Paradise are perpetual (khalidun). This is for stating this fact that both Paradise and its inhabitants are everlasting.

2. The sentence:

"For them there will be therein whatever they desire..."

is the opposite point of what is said about the people of the Hell in the 54th verse of Sura Saba, which says:

"And a gulf is set between them and that which they desire..."

3. Using the Qur'anic word /masir/ (the place of return) occurring after the word /jaza/ (reward), concerning the Paradise is an emphasis on what is found in the concept of /jaza'/ (reward) and all of them are the opposite point of the people of the Hell that have been mentioned in the verses before it:

"...they are cast, coupled in fetters, into a narrow place of that Fire..."

4. The sentence:

"...It is for your Lord a promise that must be fulfilled."

refers to this matter that the believers have prayed Allah for Paradise with all its blessings.

They are seekers and Allah is sought of to provide, as we read in verse 194 of Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3:

"Our Lord! And give us what You have promised us through Your messengers..."

All believers ask Allah such a thing mutely, for everyone who obeys His commandment has such a mute appeal.

The angels also ask Allah such a thing for the believers; as we read in Sura Al-Mu'min, No. 40, that they say about the believers:

"Our Lord! And make them enter the Gardens of Eden which you have promised them..."[16]

There is another commentary here indicating that the Qur'anic word /mas'ulan/ is an emphasis on certainty of Allah's promise. It implies that this promise is so bound to be fulfilled that believers can demand it from Allah. It is like the time that we promise a person and we also know his right to have a claim.

But there is no problem that the word /mas'ulan/ includes all these meanings.

5. With the regard to the Qur'anic sentence

"For them there will be therein whatever they desire..."

some persons ask this question that if we consider the extensive meaning of this sentence, its result is that if the people of the Paradise ask the rank of prophets and Allah's friends, they will be given what they have asked; or if they want that their sinful friends and relatives to be freed from the Hell (which they deserve), they will be freed. And there are things the like of them.

Regarding a matter its answer will be made clear there will be no curtains before the eyes of the Paradise inhabitants, they (curtains) will be put away.

They perceive the truths very well and see all proportions well. Such a thought that is to ask Allah such demands does never come to their mind. This is just like the time that in this life we ask a school boy to become a professor of university, or a criminal thief to become judge of court.

Do such thoughts come to the mind of a wise person here? In the Paradise it is so. Moreover, all their demands are overshadowed by Allah's will, and they desire what Allah desires.

Some Traditions About the Paradise

1. The Prophet (S) says:

"Everyone who dies while he believes that Allah is true, he enters Paradise."[17]

2. The Prophet (S) says;

"In the Paradise there are blessings (and favours) which no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no mind has ever imagined."[18]

3. Imam Ali (as) says:

"Your price and value is nothing but the Paradise. Do not sell yourself but for the Paradise."[19]

4. The Prophet (S) says:

"Only Muslim will enter the Paradise."[20]

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 17-18

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَقُولُ أَأَنتُمْ أَضْلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِي هَٰؤُلَاءِ أَمْ هُمْ ضَلُّوا السَّبِيلَ

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ مَا كَانَ يَنبَغِي لَنَا أَن نَّتَّخِذَ مِن دُونِكَ مِنْ أَوْلِيَآءَ وَلَكِن مَّتَّعْتَهُمْ وءَابَآءَهُمْ حَتَّي نَسُوا الذِّكْرَ وَكَانُوا قَوْمَاً بُوراً

17. “And (remember) the Day He will muster them and that which they worship instead of Allah, and He shall say: ‘Was it you who misled these My servants or did they themselves go astray from the way?’”
18. “They will say: ‘Glory be to You! It did not behoove us that we take any guardians besides you; but You did provide them and their fathers to enjoy until they forgot the Message and they were a people in perdition’.”

Pagans and their deities will be put to question in the resurrection.

Since the previous verses have talked about the fate of believers and pagans in the Hereafter and their reward and punishment, the concerned verses continue this subject in another way. The question that Allah asks pagans’ deities in the resurrection and their answer are mentioned as warning.

It says:

“And (remember) the Day He will muster them and that which they worship instead of Allah, and He shall say: ‘Was it you who misled these My servants or did they themselves go astray from the way?’”

But their answer will be as follows:

“They will say: ‘Glory be to You! It did not behoove us that we take any guardians besides you…”

Not only did we not call them to come to us, but also we confessed to Your guardianship and servitude and we did not take other man You as our deity for ourselves and for others.

The reason of their deviation was that, instead of thanking Allah for His blessings, they turned to low desires and their gratifications till they forgot the warning and, consequently they became lost folk.

The verse continues saying:

“…but You did provide them and their fathers to enjoy until they forgot the Message and they were a people in perdition’.”

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 19

فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوكُم بِمَا تَقُولُونَ فَمَا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ صَرْفاً وَلاَ نَصْراً وَمَن يَظْلِم مِنكُمْ نُذِقْهُ عَذَاباً كَبِيراً

19. “ (Allah will say to the idolaters:) ‘So they shall indeed belie you of what you say, so you shall

not be able to avert (your penalty) nor (get) help, and whoever of you be unjust, We will cause him taste a great torment."

A polytheist will be supported by no one in the Resurrection and cannot do any thing to rescue him.

Thus, in this noble verse Allah addresses polytheists:

" (Allah will say): to the idolaters:) 'So they shall indeed belie you of what you say…"

You said that they deviated you from the right path, but they count what you say as a lie.

And since the fact is such and they themselves committed their own deviation, therefore the verse says:

"…so you shall not be able to avert (your penalty) nor (get) help, and whoever of you be unjust, We will cause him taste a great torment."

Undoubtedly the Qur'anic word /zulm/ (oppression) has got an extensive concept. Though the subject of the verse is polytheism, which is one of the clear extensions of oppression, yet it does not abolish the generality of the concept of the verse.

Meanwhile the purpose of 'deities' is whether humane deities such as Christ, or devil deities such as jinn or angels, each of which had been selected by a group of pagans for worshipping. Since they have common sense and intellect, they can be questioned.

So, in order to complete the argument and to prove the falsehood of the statement of the polytheists, saying that these invited us to worship them, they are asked whether this speech is right, and they explicitly reject the polytheists' statement.

Some Points

1. The Motivation of Deviation from Monotheism:

Deities counted the main factor of this group of pagans' deviation as luxurious life.

They say:

".. but you did provide them and their fathers to enjoy until they forgot the Message and they were a people in perdition",

(instead of knowing blessings and thanking You for them, they have forgotten You).

Verily comfortable life is, on one hand, causing those who can not take welfare, and also their faith is weak, to feel conceited, for when they are given a lot of blessings, they get too big for their boots and forget Allah.

Even sometimes, like Pharaoh, they cry:

"I am the Lord".

On the other hand, such persons want to be as much as possible free and to face no boundary in gratification of their desires. They want that limitations and restrictions such as lawfulness, unlawfulness, legality and illegality do not prevent them from achieving their aims, thus they do not want to obey any rule or law and to accept the Resurrection and Reckoning Day.

Also now there are not many adherents of Allah's religion and prophets' teachings among rich people, this is the poor people who are willful supporters and faithful friends of religion.

Of course, there are some exceptions in each group, but the majority members of each group are as we said.

Meanwhile the above verse does not only put emphasis on their own prosperity, but also it emphasizes their ancestors' prosperity, for when a child grows up in affluence and wealth, it is natural that he mostly discriminates against others and he will not easily get rid of his interestand comfortable life.

While sticking with Allah's commands and religion programs need sacrificing, sometimes migration, even holy war and martyrdom and sometimes accepting kinds of deprivations and refusing to surrender themselves to the enemy, which goes with temperament of rich people less, unless their personality is superior to their material life.

If one day everything is good, they thank Allah, and if it is not good, they do not get upset and unsteady. In other words, they dominate their material life and they are not its servant and slave.

2. The Qur'anic word /bur/ is derived from the word /bawar/, which originally means severity of stagnation of something. Since severity of stagnation causes corruption, this word is also applied to mean corruption and then to mean destruction. Since a land, which has no tree, flower, and plant, is in fact corrupted and dead, it is called /ba'ir/ (fallow).

Therefore, the sentence:

"...and they were a people in perdition"

refers to this matter that, because of luxurious life and forgetting Allah and Resurrection, this group has been corrupted and destructed. And, like a dried and fallow desert, the land of their heart gets empty of flowers of humane values and fruits of virtues and spiritual life.

Studying nations that are blessed with this world's goods and know nothing of Allah and other nations makes the vast meaning of this verse more clear that how they are wallowing in moral corruption, and humane virtues can no longer be found in weathered land of their entity.

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 20

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلاَّ إِنَّهُمْ لَيَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُونَ فِي الاَسْوَاقِ وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً أَتَصْبِرُونَ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيراً

20. "And We never sent any messengers before you but they certainly ate food and walked in the markets; and We have made some of you a trial for the others: will you bear patiently? And your Lord is Ever-Seeing."

Occasion of Revelation

A group of commentators have said that some chiefs of polytheists came to the Prophet (S) and said:

"Oh Muhammad (S)! What do you want us to do for you? If you want to be a chief, we make you our chief, if you like money and wealth, we will give you some of our wealth."

But when they saw that the Prophet (S) did not give up against their propositions, they started to cook up some pretexts and said:

"What a messenger of Lord are you that eat food and walk in the market?"

They rebuked the holy Prophet (S) for eating food, because they wanted him to be an angel. They criticized him for walking in markets, for they had seen Caesars and tyrannical kings who had never gone to market, while the Prophet (S) associated with and joined people and, at the same time, he declared divine bans and orders. The pretext-seekers criticized and said:

"He wants to be our ruler, while his custom and approach is different from kings' traditions."

The above verse was sent down and made clear that the method of the Prophet of Islam (S) has been the same as that of the former prophets.

In the past several holy verses, one of the pretexts of the polytheists that why the Prophet of Islam (S) eats food and walks in the market was mentioned and it was answered concisely. The concerned verse turns to that matter again and answers it more explicitly and in detail. It says:

"And We never sent any messengers before you but they certainly ate food and walked in the markets; and We ave made some of you a trial for the others..."

This trail may be in this way that prophets are to be human and selected from oppressed people and this is a great test, for some people refuse to obey and take order from their fellow creature, especially one who is financially at a low level, and they are from this viewpoint at high level or older or more famous in society.

Another possibility is that its purpose is to test people generally by each other, for disabled people, the sick, and orphans are a test for those who are rich and healthy, and, on the contrary, healthy and rich people are a test for the poor and the sick. Are the members of the second group contented by Allah's will? Do the first group shoulder the responsibility for caring the second group?

Since these two commentaries are in line with each other, it is possible that both of them are included in the extensive concept of the verse.

Then, next to this statement, all people are addressed and are asked:

"…will you bear patiently?…"

The most important pillar of victory and success in these trials is patience and resistance. Resisting unrestrained desires that prevent accepting the Truth, enduring difficulties that are faced at the time of doing duties and performing missions, and being patient with calamities and painful events, for man's life will not be empty of them.

In brief, in almost all cases it is only with the power of patience and endurance that one can succeed in passing this great test.

In the end of the verse under discussion, as a warning, the Qur'an says:

"…And your Lord is Ever-Seeing."

Never imagine that Allah sees none of your behaviors and deeds. His knowledge operates in minute detail and nothing is hidden from Him. He sees and knows everything precisely.

1. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 192
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse
3. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the commentary, following the verse
4. Sura Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 125
5. Sura Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 124
6. Sura Furqan, No. 25, verse 13
7. Sura Al-Abraham'raf, No. 7, verse 96
8. Sura Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 73
9. Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 162
10. Bihar, Vol. 8, p. 261
11. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, 39477
12. Qurar-ul-Hikam, 10892
13. Muhajjat-ul-Bayza, Vol. 8, p. 356
14. Bihar, Vol. 8, p. 208, taken from Nahj-ul-Balaqah
15. Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 40
16. Sura Al-Mu'min, No. 40, verse 8
17. Tauhid by Saduq, p. 29
18. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 14, p. 455
19. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 14, p. 645

20. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 1, p. 79
